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THE

MEMOIRS

OF A

FEMME DE CHAMBRE.

A NOVEL.

BY THE

COUNTESS OF BLESSINGTON.

IN THREE VOLUMES.

VOL. III.

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MEMOIRS

OF

A FEMME DE CHAMBRE.

CHAPTER I.

When left alone with her gentle mistress, her timidity and embarrassment pained, while they filled with pity, the heart of Selina. Like a beautiful bird in a gilded cage, pining for freedom, and loathing its gorgeous prison, sate this fair young creature, insensible to the splendour around her, or only remembering it as the badge of the slavery which gladly would she escape from. From the first moment of her entering the house, Mrs. Fraser treated Selina not as a dependent or inferior, but as an equal, or rather as a friend. She, with the intuitive

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quickness of her sex, at once perceived that Selina was more suited to be her companion than servant. When Selina offered to dress her beautiful hair, the fair Amy said, "I really feel ashamed to allow you, Miss Stratford, to perform any menial service for me. You shall arrange my hair, if you, in return, will permit me to dress yours."

This artless delicacy pleased Selina, who could so well appreciate it; but with a gentle firmness, acquired by the knowledge of the world gained within the last year or two, she taught Mrs. Fraser to comprehend that the relative positions of mistress and *femme de chambre* must not be lost sight of between them. When the duties of the toilette were over, Mrs. Fraser would entreat her to read aloud to her, to play and sing to her, or to place her easel, or embroidery-frame, near to her own, and converse while they drew or worked. Often would deep sighs burst from the heart of this young creature, and tears drop from her eyes; and she would cast an imploring look at Selina, which said, as plain as

ever glance spoke, "Why don't you ask me the cause of my sighs and tears?"

But Selina, though most anxious to contribute to the comfort of her amiable mistress, was by no means desirous to possess her confidence, fearful that she might, in that case, be expected to be made the medium of communication between her and those dear relatives, whose cruel separation from her caused, she felt assured, the emotions she so frequently witnessed. It was no selfish dread of losing her position, that influenced Selina to avoid eliciting or encouraging the confidence of Mrs. Fraser. She feared that that amiable young person's already painful situation would be rendered still more so, by her harsh and stern husband, should he discover, that, in spite of his interdiction, she had held any communication with her mother and sisters, and this dread weighed on her mind, and induced her to endeavour to change the subject whenever, as was frequently the case, Mrs. Fraser was leading to it. Painful was it to Selina to witness the expression of keen disappointment that clouded the fair face

of her gentle mistress on these occasions; yet when, as was his custom, Mr. Fraser entered the dressing-room abruptly, without even knocking at the door, and examined the countenances of his wife and herself, as if he suspected they were carrying on some secret plot, she rejoiced that *she* could meet his searching glance undismayed, and that his scrutiny all over the chamber, in order to discover something to justify his suspicions, was fruitless. The most jealous husband could not betray more anxiety or ingenuity to detect some clue to a love affair, by which his honour and peace would be compromised, than did this self-tormentor, to find out whether his innocent and unhappy wife kept up any communication with her family. When her cheek grew pale, and her eyes betrayed that sleep was a stranger to them, he would send off for the most eminent physician, to whom he would state his fears for her health, which he declared was dearer to him than life; and, for the next three or four days, he would watch her countenance with all the trembling dread with which a fond mother examines that of her

only child. "There must be some dangerous malady preying on her," would he say, in answer to the physician's assertion, that *he* saw only a delicacy of structure requiring care, and an extreme sensibility.

"Avoidance of exposure to the night air, and a peculiar attention to preserve the young lady from all causes of mental anxiety, are all that are required; and with these your daughter will do well," would every new doctor consulted declare; for, dissatisfied with each, a fresh one was called in every time that his fears were excited. Perhaps his anger, at having his youthful wife always mistaken for his daughter, had something to do in his invariably consulting a new physician, and as each repeated nearly the same words, he had no confidence in any of them. "What cause for anxiety *can* she have?" would he say to the medical adviser. "I have the means, and the desire, to gratify the most extravagant wishes. Could she eat gold she might have it; and her jewels surpass those of the proudest of our aristocracy."

"Riches do not always bestow happiness, Sir," would be the reply. "Mrs. Fraser is very young; perhaps the want of companions of her own age may have engendered the melancholy which her countenance reveals."

"But she has a companion, a youthful one, too, who plays and sings to her, who, in short, devotes herself wholly to her amusement."

"A hired one, probably."

"Yes; but a very accomplished one, and very gentle and sweet-tempered, as my wife tells me."

"With so plain, so aged, and so stern a husband as you," thought the physician, "it can hardly be wondered at, that the poor young creature is low-spirited. How many have I seen fade, droop, and die, under similar circumstances!"

But though each of the medical men called in had formed the same opinion, none had given utterance to this last reflection; and Mr. Fraser was left to dwell on the probable cause of his wife's altered looks, and constant sadness, namely his own harsh conduct, in

having torn asunder those ties with which her peace, nay, her very life was bound up. But although his conscience frequently whispered this cause, and that he could not silence its murmurs, he was obstinately bent on not following its dictates—no, not even to see the roses of health bloom on her cheek again, and her eyes resume their lustre, would he consent to her renewing her intercourse with her family. Much as he liked her—and he did love her as much as it was in his selfish nature to love aught save self, her sweetness of temper and gentleness having rivetted the affection her beauty had excited,—he would have preferred seeing her sink into a premature grave, rather than behold her lavishing on her mother and sisters that tenderness, the demonstrations of which, previous to his marriage, had frequently awakened his jealousy and envy; and which he felt never would be showered on himself.

In vain did he bestow on her the most costly gifts, procure for her delicate appetite the rarest dainties, and fill her splendid conser-

vatory with the choicest flowers—all these proofs of attention were received with a faint smile and a few gracious words, but it was evident they afforded her no pleasure. Then would he accuse her of ingratitude, declare that half the fine things he had heaped on her would have rendered any reasonable woman in the world happy, and that he was the most unfortunate man on earth, in having a wife whom all his exertions could not make even cheerful. Sometimes his timid victim would endeavour to lead to the forbidden subject of what could restore her cheerfulness; though happiness, she felt, with him, would be out of the question, for a personal distaste, imbibed from the very commencement of their acquaintance, and greatly strengthened by his cruelty in separating her from those dear ones for whose sakes she had sacrificed herself, rendered his presence irksome to her, and even his attentions odious. Nevertheless, a sense of the respect due to a husband, and to one, too, old enough to be her grandfather, so far influenced her manner, that, although loathing his person,

and shrinking with disgust from even an approach to familiarity on his part, she invariably treated him with gentleness and deference. The only relief she experienced from the sadness that was now becoming habitual to her, was, when he was absent from home; then would she rètire to her dressing-room or boudoir, and, *tête-à-tête* with Selina, engaged in reading or conversing, forget for a brief time her unhappiness. As she got to know Selina better, her regard for her rapidly increased; and as Selina discovered the sweetness of temper, innocence, and candour of her youthful mistress's character, her affection and esteem for her augmented. Mrs. Fraser would question her on the events of her life, not from a motive of idle curiosity, but from a real interest in her; and Selina would disclose to her passages in her short but troubled life, which greatly touched the feelings of the excellent young creature.

"You were too young to be sensible of a mother's love, to have missed her tender care," would Mrs. Fraser reply; "you think of her

as blessed in a better world, where the wicked cease from troubling, and the weary are at rest; but if you knew the anguish of being separated from the dearest, fondest mother that ever lived, every recollection of whom is mingled with some mark of tenderness, some proof of self-abnegation, to be found only in a mother's heart, how would you pity me; but to know that she is within a distance that might be passed in an hour, that in an hour I might be clasped to that dear heart whence I drew my nurture when an infant, on which my head was so often pillowed to sleep, yet to be as wholly severed from her, as if seas rolled between us; to be denied even the comfort of hearing from her, or of writing to her, oh! this indeed is misery;" and tears would stop her utterance. Then would she resume: "To be separated from sisters, dear, fond sisters, who shared every thought, who lightened, by sharing, every care; to advance whose interests, as well as to secure comfort for a dear mother, too long deprived of it, the sacrifice of all one's own feelings was made, and to find it made in vain! Oh, how hard

is it to bear! and can it be wondered at that health sinks under such trials? I would have been so grateful, too, for any kindness shown to those so dear to me. I would conquer the distaste that, in spite of every effort to resist it, daily increases towards him. I have vowed at the altar to love, honour, and obey—gratitude would have supplied the place of a more tender sentiment; yes, I would have been his servant, his slave, anything, to prove my gratitude, my devotion to him."

Frequently would Mr. Fraser send for Selina, and question her: "Your mistress," would he say, "appeared agitated yesterday, when I entered the dressing-room; what was the cause?"

"Mrs. Fraser's health and spirits suffer, I think, Sir, from the seclusion in which she lives."

"Do you think that occasional visits to the theatres would amuse her?"

"No, Sir. I do not believe she likes public amusements."

"Then what do you think is the cause of her low spirits? With all that wealth can purchase, what can she want?"

"If I may take the liberty of telling you my opinion, Sir, I should say she pines for an intercourse with her relations."

"Which she shall never have," interrupted Mr. Fraser; "no, sooner would I behold her die, than yield to her wishes on this point. Yes, sooner would I see her borne to her grave, although she is the sole object on earth dear to me, than witness the demonstrations of her affection lavished on those I hate; yes, on those I abhor, because they have engrossed all her tenderness."

Then, as if angry with himself for having revealed his hardness of heart, he would tell Selina to be gone, and menace her with instant dismissal if she ever betrayed a word he said to her to her mistress. At other times he would offer her bribes, if she would undertake to reason with Mrs. Fraser, and to tell her that when women married they seldom saw much of their mothers or sisters after; that it was childishness and folly to pine at being separated from them; and that hundreds of ladies, young, beautiful, and of high birth, would deem them-

selves happy to be his wife, and possess the treasures he had lavished on her.

When Selina pleaded, that it would be vain to address such arguments to one whose affections were so deeply engaged, he would fly into a rage, and dismiss her from his presence, saying, she was almost as foolish as her mistress.

Nevertheless, blind, obstinate, and hard-hearted as was this selfish old man, he had conceived a good opinion of Selina, and had so much more confidence in her than in any other person, that he would have been sorry to see her leave his house.

Day by day the cheek of Mrs. Fraser became paler, her form more attenuated, and her langour increased. She was now reduced to a state of such weakness as to be unable to leave her sofa; and Selina, who marked with deep regret the progress of her decline, watched over her with unceasing care.

The prolonged illness of the wife of the *millionnaire*,—a lady, too, whose beauty, no less than whose splendid equipages and magnificent diamonds, had been the means of drawing public attention to the old nabob as well as to

herself, could not long be kept a secret. The newspapers announced the fact, in the set phrases of regret generally employed on similar occasions; and the door of Mr. Fraser was daily besieged by inquirers after the health of the invalid. The physicians called in had various consultations. There was a frequent pulling out of gold watches; sundry sapient shakes of the head, and differences of opinion, not only as to the malady, its cause, seat, probable duration, and termination, but also as to the treatment to be pursued; each inclining to some pet system of his own, yet all agreeing on one point, namely, that if Mrs. Fraser did not get better, she must get worse—a fact that even the most ignorant of her domestics might have discovered without a medical consultation.

The fatigue to which Selina was exposed, seldom leaving the chamber of her mistress, and sitting up night after night by her bedside, had such an effect on her own health, that one of the doctors, having noticed her altered looks, desired that a nurse should be called in to relieve her, by taking her place at night by the

pillow of their patient. This doctor, a humane and worthy man, had become greatly interested in the state of Mrs. Fraser; and her husband, tortured by the dread of losing her, felt more disposed to adopt his advice than that of any of the other physicians. When, therefore, Doctor Percy insisted on the necessity of a nurse being called in, and stated that he knew one whom he could recommend as an intelligent and trustworthy person, Mr. Fraser gave permission to have her sent, and a few hours after she made her appearance. Selina was alone present when she entered, and was instantly struck by the trepidation evident in her manner. Her hand shook, her lips trembled, and there was an agitation in her whole manner, in spite of every effort to conceal it, that arrested Selina's attention. "You seem ill," whispered she.

"No, Madam, only the effect of having ascended the stairs too rapidly. The palpitation will subside in a moment."

Mrs. Fraser was asleep, and often murmured the names of her mother and sisters. Each

time that she did so, the nurse trembled, and turned pale as death, and Selina observed that she turned away her head, and stealthily applied her handkerchief to her eyes. There was a nervousness in all her movements, a suppressed agitation, that it was evident she sought to subdue and conceal, but which, nevertheless, manifested itself in various ways. When Mr. Fraser entered the sick chamber the nurse seemed to make a strong effort to recover her self-control. Although the curtains were drawn, and only a very feeble light admitted in the room, she avoided, as much as possible, coming near him. "You are the nurse sent by Dr. Percy?" said he, eyeing her suspiciously.

"Yes, Sir," was the reply, accompanied by a respectful curtsey.

Selina noticed that these two monosyllables were uttered by the nurse in a totally different tone of voice to that in which she had spoken to her. The bearing, and manner, too, of the nurse were different. Previous to Mr. Fraser's entrance, although agitated, there was an unmistakable air and demeanour of a gentlewoman

about the woman, while now she appeared to affect the air and manner of the generality of persons of her class.

"Have you had much experience in your calling?" inquired Mr. Fraser.

"Yes, Sir, a good deal; and Dr. Percy halways *be's* so good as to recommend me, in cases where he is very hanxious about his patient."

Mr. Fraser drew back the curtain to look on the sleeper, the nurse standing behind him; and Selina saw the woman shudder, and turn pale as death, as she caught a view of the invalid. She seemed ready to sink to the earth, for a moment; but when Mr. Fraser let the curtain fall, and turned to speak to her, she had conquered her feelings, and assumed a look of stolid indifference.

"Don't allow any one to enter this room, except the doctors and Miss Stratford," said Mr. Fraser; "and remember that, when Miss Stratford is out of the room, you must never allow a note, nor a message, to be delivered to Mrs. Fraser, nor from her, under penalty of my severest displeasure."

"I will be sure to hattend to your horders, Sir," was the answer, accompanied by another low curtsey; and he left the room.

No sooner had he disappeared, than the nurse sank into a chair, gasping for breath, and trembling violently. Selina poured her out a glass of water, and raised it to her lips, and when a portion of it had been swallowed, the nurse seemed revived, and gave her an eloquent glance of gratitude, with a few whispered words of thanks, uttered in such correct phraseology, and so wholly free from the vulgar addition and aspiration of the letter *h*, as to convince her that, when speaking to Mr. Fraser, the nurse had not spoken in her natural voice or manner. Selina also observed, that, although she was a woman of much more than ordinary obesity, her movements were so light, that they could hardly be heard. Her hands, too, were wonderfully small, as compared to the large figure to which they appertained, and the spectacles she wore could not prevent Selina from noticing that her eyes did not look as if they required their aid.

When Mrs. Fraser awoke, Selina informed her that the nurse, recommended by Dr. Percy, was present.

"I am glad," replied she, "for you, dear Miss Stratford, may now have a night's rest, of which I am sure you stand greatly in need. Nurse, be so good as to give me a little barley-water."

Selina had kept her eye on the nurse while Mrs. Fraser spoke, and observed that she was again greatly agitated. It was, however, evident that the feelings under which she now was influenced were of a different kind to the former ones; for tears rushed to her eyes, and she was compelled to remove her spectacles to wipe them off, before she could pour out the barley-water, and present it to the invalid.

Mrs. Fraser looked at her for a moment, took the glass from her hand, and said, "You tremble. Are you ill?"

"No, Madam, thank you, I am only a little flurried, for the moment, at coming into a strange place."

The same voice was assumed in speaking to

Mrs. Fraser, as when answering her husband's questions, but this time the letter *h* was omitted to be added to the words to which it had previously been joined.

"Poor woman, she is so large, that moving about must indeed flurry her," observed Mrs. Fraser, in French, to Selina. "Arrange my pillow, nurse, it is not comfortable," said Mrs. Fraser.

Selina, seeing that the nurse's agitation still continued, approached the bed to arrange the pillow.

"No, dear, good Selina, you must let nurse do it, that I may get accustomed to her mode of managing it, otherwise I shall miss you too much when you are taking your needful rest."

"Indeed I do not require more rest, dear Madam," replied Selina, "and do not like to resign my post."

"But I must not grow so selfish as to allow you to injure your health through your anxiety to save mine."

The nurse cast a look so full of gratitude towards Selina, that the latter became more

convinced than ever that the person before her took no common interest in the invalid; and a gleam of *who* she might possibly be flashed through her mind. The nurse now approached the bed, raised Mrs. Fraser gently in her arms, supported her on her left, while with her right she moved the pillows, and smoothed them, and then placed the invalid in an easy posture.

"Thanks, good nurse, how comfortable you have made me! You must not be jealous, dear Selina, but I really never have had my pillows so nicely arranged, or felt myself so tenderly, so gently moved in my bed, since my own darling mother used to smoothe them, and move me when I was ill."

The nurse trembled so violently, that Mrs. Fraser, although she was concealed from her by the curtain, became conscious of her emotion. "Do, Selina, ring the bell, and order a glass of wine for nurse; she requires it, I am quite sure, she is so very nervous."

"If you will permit me to leave the room for a few minutes, I shall quite recover, Madam," said the nurse, who then quickly

glided away, opening and closing the door so softly as scarcely to be heard.

"It is very strange, Selina, but I who dislike fat and flaxen-haired people, and persons who wear spectacles, all which prejudices I know to be very foolish, cannot help feeling drawn towards this strange nurse, who has all these imperfections. There is something nice in the sound of her voice, which recalls some one very dear to me to my mind; and had I closed my eyes, or not looked at her, I could have fancied that I was resting on my darling mother's arm, when she supported me. Yes, I feel I shall like her, though she does look very disagreeable, with her profusion of flaxen curls, her spectacles, and her great unwieldy form."

CHAPTER II.

The reflections of Mrs. Fraser made so strong an impression on Selina, that they almost confirmed the suspicions she had previously formed, that the nurse was other than what she assumed to be. What if she were actually the mother of Mrs. Fraser, and had sought access to her child by the only means in her power, and had disguised herself to avoid detection? Yes, it must be so. How else could her agitation, her altered voice and manner when speaking to Mr. Fraser, and her tears, be accounted for? Selina felt her heart filled with pity for the mother, thus compelled to travesty herself, and act the part of a mercenary nurse to her own child, at the risk that if a detection took place, she would be expulsed with insult from

the house, by the hard-hearted and relentless tyrant, who, by keeping her daughter from her and her sisters, had reduced her to the helpless state in which she was now placed. She determined to do all in her power to render the position of Mrs. Herbert as little painful as possible, by screening her from the watchful scrutiny of Mr. Fraser, and attending to her comforts.

"Illness is apt, by weakening the nerves, to engender many strange fancies," observed Mrs. Fraser, after a long silence; "do you know, Selina, that when I felt the quick pulsations of the nurse's heart, and the gentle touches of her smooth soft hand, I was so reminded of my mother, that tears came into my eyes, and I looked in her face in search of a likeness. But I believe it is not an unusual thing, when all one's thoughts are filled by one object, to look for a resemblance; nay more, to fancy one has found it, in another's face. When I used to drive in the streets when I came back after my marriage, I used to gaze at every woman accompanied by two nice-looking girls

I saw, thinking that they might be my dear mother and sisters, and I used to fancy I traced resemblances to them. Now there is positively something about the mouth and teeth of this nurse, that greatly reminds me of my darling mother's; I wish she had raven-black hair, and not those flaxen locks, and then the likeness would be stronger. My mother is very slight, and has such a *distingué* air, and then her face is very fair and delicate, while nurse's is coarse and red; but I am a fool, am I not, Selina, to indulge in such fancies?"

As the evening wore away, the nurse became more composed. She was evidently either of a very taciturn nature, a peculiarity seldom to be met with in persons of her profession, or else she was fearful of her voice being recognised, and Selina was disposed to accept the latter hypothesis. She never spoke but when addressed, and then replied as briefly as possible. Yet there were moments when her countenance lighted up, and words seemed hovering on her lips; but she checked them, and remained absorbed in thought, her eyes

constantly fixed on the bed, and her ear catching every sound that proceeded from it. Did the invalid betray the slightest symptom of restlessness, the nurse was instantly by her bedside, ready to move her, and smoothe her pillow; and never did she fulfil these duties of her calling without Mrs. Fraser's expressing her satisfaction at the mode in which it was done, as also remarking how much it reminded her of her mother. Such allusions never failed to produce a visible effect on the nurse, notwithstanding her endeavours to conceal it.

It had been agreed, that Selina was to fill the place of nurse during the day, while the latter slept; and during the night nurse was to remain with the invalid. This arrangement appeared to satisfy Mrs. Norman, (so was the nurse named;) and Selina could not help thinking that her satisfaction was caused by this arrangement keeping her out of sight of Mr. Fraser, whose presence always flurried and alarmed her. When Doctor Percy paid his daily visits, he several times expressed a desire to see the nurse; but, when told by Selina that she was

asleep, he forbore to urge it. One night Selina heard, or fancied she heard, a noise in the chamber of Mrs. Fraser, which was at no great distance from her own, and fearful that some change for the worse had occurred, she arose, and with stealthy steps entered it. Mrs. Norman was on her knees, praying by the bedside, tears streaming down her cheeks, and an expression of such acute anguish on her countenance—that countenance now more exposed by the spectacles having been removed, that scarcely a doubt of the justice of her suspicions remained in the mind of Selina. Mrs. Norman started in evident alarm, the moment she became sensible of the entrance of some person in the room. She arose from her kneeling posture, snatched up her spectacles, and hastily put them on. When, however, she saw that the intruder was Selina, her alarm seemed to diminish, and she gradually recovered her self-possession. In a few minutes after Selina's entrance, Mrs. Fraser sighed heavily, and murmured audibly, "Mother, dear, dear mother, come to me!"

The nurse started from her chair, flew, rather than ran, to the bedside, opened the curtain, and bent over the sleeper, who, awakened by the movement, yet still not sufficiently so to have resumed consciousness, flung her arms around the neck of Mrs. Norman, pressed her passionately to her breast, exclaiming, "Mother, darling mother, you are come to me at last."

Quite overcome by this surprise, the nurse sank fainting on the bed. Selina ran to her assistance, and Mrs. Fraser, now perfectly awake, sat up, and looked anxiously at the poor woman, who, utterly insensible, gave no symptom of life, save a slight pulsation of the heart. Selina bathed her temples with cold water; and, to be enabled to do it more effectually, removed the mass of light curls that covered her brow. In the operation the false hair fell off, as well as the cap, and the natural hair, of a shining black, besprent with grey, stood revealed.

"My mother! oh, my dear, dear mother!" exclaimed Mrs. Fraser, "my heart told me it was

you!" and, bursting into a passionate fit of tears, she fondly embraced her parent.

"Fly, fly to the door, Selina," said she, "and lock it securely. We shall be lost, should Mr. Fraser discover that she is here."

The injunction was rapidly performed; and now Selina, anxious to relieve Mrs. Herbert, opened her dress and unlaced her corset, when she found that, instead of the very large woman the pretended nurse had appeared to be, she was, in reality, a slight person enveloped in several wadded dresses. The exertions of Selina to restore the suspended animation of Mrs. Herbert, were not crowned with success for half an hour. She then opened her eyes, looked around, as if awaking from a dream, when meeting the love-beaming eyes of her daughter, filled with tears of affection, fixed on her face, she became conscious of what was passing around her.

It would be difficult, if not impossible, to describe the scene that ensued. Pressed in each other's arms, the mother and daughter mingled their tears and embraces, looked in

each other's faces again and again, as if they would note the ravages made by sorrow at their separation.

"My child, my precious child, how you are changed since I parted from you, blooming in health!" said Mrs. Herbert, in accents so full of sadness, that they went right to the hearts of her hearers; Selina being scarcely less moved than Mrs. Fraser.

"And you, my dear, my blessed mother, how pale, how thin you have grown! There were no white locks amid the dark ones I used to be so proud of when I left you!" and the daughter pressed the dishevelled tresses of her mother to her lips. "But we will part no more, dearest mother. You will take me to my old home, to my sisters, will you not? Oh, I have been so wretched without you and them, that I prayed for death!"

How did the tears flow down the pale cheeks of Mrs. Herbert, as she listened to the artless words of her child; and felt her own helplessness to comply with the touching appeal addressed to her!

"You do not answer me, dearest mother! Why do you not speak; why not promise that you will take me with you, to dwell for evermore in my old, my happy home? You know not how I hate all the splendour that surrounds me. It only reminds me how dearly it has been purchased—purchased by our separation!"

The agony of the mother is not to be described, while revealing to her innocent daughter, a creature wholly ignorant of the world and its laws, that the day, the fatal day that saw her bestow her hand on Mr. Fraser, deprived her parent of all right or power to remove her from his control.

"Almighty God!" exclaimed Mrs. Fraser, "am I then doomed to be his slave for ever! Must I drag on the chain that galls me, that preys on my very life, and endure to pass the remnant of it away from you, from my sisters? No, no, death would be a thousand times preferable!" and here, exhausted by her emotion, the poor young creature fell back on her pillow.

"We must not give way to despair, my

precious darling! Mr. Fraser may yet be moved to pity, and consent that you should see us. When he is made aware that your illness has been occasioned by the separation from me, from your sisters, he *will not*, no, he *cannot* refuse to let us meet, yes frequently meet, and write to each other. You will tell him this, darling, and pray him to consent to your wishes. He loves you, it cannot be otherwise; and he will not refuse that on which your happiness—your health depends!"

"Mother, you know him not. Could you believe that I had given way to despair, until I had tried every means to bend his cold and stubborn heart? I have prayed to him, on my knees I have prayed; I have covered his feet with my tears, as an abject slave before her tyrant master, to be allowed to see you, or even to write to or to hear from you; but I knelt and prayed in vain. He will never relent; and nought remains for me but death, to free me from this cruel bondage. Finding him deaf to my entreaties, I tried to move him by a patient submission to his will; I dried my tears whenever

I heard his step, and I importuned him no more; but all, all was unavailing. He believes that, while he lavishes gold and all the gaudy trappings of wealth about me; while he heaps the most costly pearls and diamonds on me, I have no cause to be unhappy; and that, while he calls in a host of physicians to minister to my ruined health, leaving my tortured heart to prey on this weak frame, he has nothing to reproach himself with."

Well and truly had the artless and wretched wife revealed the nature of her stern husband. The disclosure agonized her fond mother, whose worst thoughts of the man who had torn her child from her, who would rudely burst asunder the bonds of love and nature that united her to her family, had never gone so far as to believe, that, were the health, the life of the wife he professed to adore, at stake, he would not instantly consent to aught that would save her. As the conviction of his utter sternness and callous nature was now forced on her, the doting mother's pale face became almost terrible, from the expression of despair imprinted on it. She gazed on her faded child; a shudder passed

over her frame; and she lifted her tearful eyes, as if appealing to God, now that hope of mortal aid had left her; and then exclaimed, "And it was *I, I,* the mother who should have shielded her, who should have warned, nay, prevented her from wedding one so old, so stern, as this terrible man, who allowed her to bestow the inestimable blessing of her hand on one so wholly unworthy of it! My child, my poor child, can you forgive your unhappy mother for having consigned you to such a fate? Alas! alas! the pressure of poverty had blinded me to the possible chances of misery to my daughter; and with sorrow—oh, how deep yet unavailing! I must now admit, that I have merited the heavy punishment that has fallen on me! Would to God it had fallen on me alone!"

"You must not accuse yourself, dearest mother. *Indeed,* you are not to blame. Who could have foreseen, that aught in human shape could be so cruel as to part us? You saw me form this now hated marriage without any symptom of repugnance; nay, more, with cheerfulness, confident as I felt, that through it

I should be enabled to see you, darling mother, and my dear sisters, restored to an elegant competency, if not to affluence! I thought only of the future happy home, the many comforts and enjoyments, my marriage would secure you; and in this anticipated happiness I forgot the age, the ugliness, the chilling manners of him who was to enable me to bestow it. And had he done so, mother, I would have blessed him; I would have been as the most dutiful of daughters to him; and my whole study would have been to repay his generosity to those dearer to me than life!"

The countenance of Mrs. Herbert while her daughter spoke might have offered a study to an artist who wished to paint the tragic muse. Never had Selina beheld aught so touching —despair and resignation struggled for mastery in that pale face, as all the unselfish and loving nature of her child was revealed to her. And to think that such a creature, so young, so beautiful, so pure and noble-minded, should be so wholly, so irrevocably in the power of one so stern, so lost to every feeling as Mr. Fraser,

was torture. In the long and wakeful nights which had passed since her adored daughter had been taken from her, when she tried to imagine some cause for his cruel conduct, and conjured up every probable motive, her worst fears had never pictured him as dark, as terrible, and revoltingly selfish as he was now proved to be.

She felt that with such a man her child must be wretched. Nurtured in the lap of affection, and surrounded from her infancy by a mother and sisters, who, owing to the perfect sympathy that existed in their tastes and thoughts, loved her with a tenderness even beyond that common to such near relations, how was she to bear the change to solitude, with such an uncongenial companion? It was as if a delicate plant, reared in a choice conservatory, where it had been watched with skilful care, had been removed to some dreary and chilling atmosphere, where it must soon fade and die; and she looked at the altered face of her child, and saw that such must be her fate; nay, that already had the work of destruction commenced; for the

fragile being before her could not long bear up against the cruel destiny she had wrought for herself, when, through love for her kindred, she had wedded the terrible man who ruled it.

"Hark! did I not hear a voice?" exclaimed Mrs. Fraser, starting up from her pillow, and terror imprinted on every feature. "Oh! mother, disguise yourself quickly, for should he come we are lost. Help her, Selina; load her with all those envelopes that concealed her from my fond eyes; surely they will preserve her from his. Quickly put up her own dark hair, and tie on the false. Ah! there, I can no longer recognise her; even the comfort of seeing her in her own natural shape and appearance is denied me;" and the poor invalid burst afresh into tears.

"Would to Heaven, darling, that I were never to leave off this disguise, could it secure me the happiness of being near you, of looking at your sweet face, of hearing that dear voice!"

The noise that alarmed Mrs. Fraser was the moving about of the housemaids to perform their matinal tasks; and now the grey

dawn began to peep through the shutters, and reminded Mrs. Herbert that she must resume her place as nurse, and be prepared for the entrance of the housemaid, or of *him*, the most dreaded, should he descend to inquire after the invalid. A few drops, of a composing nature, were administered to Mrs. Fraser, at whose request her mother partook some also; and Selina, after receiving the thanks of both mother and child for the warm sympathy she had evinced for them, stole stealthily to her chamber, to dress, and replace "the nurse."

In a few weeks a visible improvement took place in the health of Mrs. Fraser. Her mother's presence seemed to revive and re-animate the principle of life in her delicate frame, as the change from a deleterious climate to a mild and genial one revivifies a broken constitution. The hours of fond communion passed together; the particulars demanded and given of those dear sisters, so often thought of, had made the hours fly so rapidly, that when weeks had gone by, the mother and daughter felt as if only days had passed. There were times

when Mrs. Fraser's heart revolted at seeing her mother treated as a menial, when her stern and ill-bred husband questioned her rudely, or when the housekeeper or housemaid spoke to her familiarly; but Mrs. Herbert taught her to conquer these movements of anger, by making her feel, as she did herself, that these little annoyances should give pleasure rather than pain, as furnishing proofs that her disguise had successfully imposed on those who offered them.

"Ah! but mother, how dreadful it is that I am getting well," would Mrs. Fraser say; "for the moment the doctors announce my convalescence you will be sent away from me; and how, after having been again accustomed to the blessing of having you near me, can I ever submit to our separation?"

Whenever Mr. Fraser entered his wife's chamber she would assume a languid air, answer his inquiries in a low voice, and enact the invalid, when she was so much better that she trembled lest her physician should announce that fact to him; but they were in no hurry

to abandon a patient who still persisted in declaring that she was not cured, and whose husband was a nabob.

"I should hate myself, dearest mother," would Mrs. Fraser say, "for practising deception about my health, were it not the only chance for detaining you near me; and yet to think, that to retain this blessing I keep you from my sisters, and that you are compelled not only to assume a menial garb, and be treated as a servant, but to injure your health, more precious to me than life, by living enveloped in that huge mass of drapery, that fevers though it conceals you."

Mrs. Herbert had explained to her daughter, that having seen in the newspaper the announcement of her illness, she had searched until she succeeded in discovering the physicians who had been called in to attend her. This discovery had been made by an old and faithful servant; through whose means, also, she learned that a nurse was required. Knowing, by report, that the person recommended by Dr. Percy was an unusually fat

woman, the thought of representing her, could she but gain her consent to the measure, at once flashed across the mind of Mrs. Herbert; and she instantly went to Mrs. Norman, told her the truth, promising, that if permitted to personate her, all the remuneration received should be transferred to her. Mrs. Norman, herself a mother, and a good-hearted woman, was touched by the grief and agitation of Mrs. Herbert. Perhaps the desire of fulfilling a long and lucrative engagement in the country, without forfeiting the good opinion of Dr. Percy, by declining the one now proposed, had its might in influencing her decision. She finally yielded to the prayers of the agonized mother, with a proviso that Mrs. Herbert should remain out of sight of the doctor; and, having furnished that lady with the loan of habiliments and false curls, to enable her at once to enter the establishment of Mr. Fraser, and explained that the usual remuneration was a guinea a day, she saw Mrs. Herbert depart, filled with gratitude towards her, for having consented to her wishes.

"Yes, it's very pleasant to serve a worthy person, as this poor lady certainly is," soliloquized Mrs. Norman, "especially where, by doing so, one can likewise serve oneself. I shall, for the next few weeks, be paid for duties performed in the country, while my representative is earning money for me in London; and, after all, should Dr. Percy ever discover the truth, he, with his good heart, will readily pardon this proof of the goodness of mine."

CHAPTER III.

It was edifying to hear Mrs. Herbert counselling her daughter to obedience to her husband, and to a patient submission to his will. The excellent woman left no means untried, to strengthen the mind of this gentle and inexperienced creature; but, perhaps, of all the arguments made use of, there was not one which produced so strong an effect on her mind, as the assurance, that her mother could better bear the separation, could she be assured that her child was submitting to it with fortitude, and not ruining her health by repining.

"On the spirit in which we receive trials, dearest, depends their effect," would she say; "patience robs them of much of their bitterness; and the consciousness of having fulfilled our duty to the utmost of our power, becomes

a balm to the wounds inflicted by Fate. Let this balm be yours; merit the protection of the Almighty, by submission to *his* will. Remember that there are many persons more unfortunate than you; and that the greater the trials in this life, the greater is the merit of submission. Let me have the comfort of knowing, that the impropriety I have committed, in entering clandestinely a house, whose master had prohibited my presence, has, at least, had a salutary effect on your health and mine."

"But you will write to me, will you not, dearest mother, and let me write to you? Selina, dear, kind, good Selina, will be the medium of communication between us. I know she will. With a letter, now and then, from you, darling mother, I will not sink into despair, as before."

We leave it to casuists to decide, whether or not the fond mother was wrong in yielding to the prayers of her child; or whether Selina committed a crime in pledging herself to convey the correspondence between them; but

even should a verdict be pronounced, by rigid moralists, against Mrs. Herbert and Selina, for thus yielding to the reiterated entreaties of Mrs. Fraser, they would, nevertheless, be consoled by the approval of their own hearts, for having lightened the burden that pressed so heavily on that of the young and unhappy wife.

And now the physicians pronounced the sentence so long dreaded, that Mrs. Fraser was so much better, that a nurse was no longer required. Mr. Fraser immediately signified his desire that Mrs. Norman should leave at the close of the week, only two days of which had to elapse; and his wife was endeavouring to muster up all her strength of mind, to support the separation. Ever since the notification of the improvement in her health had been made to him, which was not until some weeks after those in the secrets of the sick chamber had been aware of the fact, he had become a much more frequent visitor in it, so that the long conversations between the mother and child were broken in on; and they hardly dared count on an hour's freedom from his presence.

Without any occupation, he walked continually from room to room of his splendid mansion; scolded the servants, found fault with everything that was done, and incapable, from his bad temper and ill-governed mind, of enjoying a moment's repose, it seemed to be his study that nobody else should, if he could prevent it. Mrs. Herbert, from her first entrance in the house, had incurred his especial dislike. He never saw her without treating her with a rudeness, as unusual as ill-bred, towards a woman occupied in nursing the person he professed to love above all others—his wife. He would mutter his dislike of fat people in her hearing, and his distaste of old women with flaxen locks; and her equanimity under his unprovoked insults had no effect in mitigating them. The evening of the day previous to that named for her departure, Mrs. Herbert was exhorting her weeping daughter to bear their approaching separation with courage, when the door of the chamber was violently thrown open, and, pale with rage, Mr. Fraser rushed in.

"Leave my house, leave my house, instantly," shrieked he, his discordant voice raised to its utmost pitch. Mrs. Herbert grasped a chair for support, and seemed ready to sink on the floor. "I have discovered you, base and shameless woman, thus to steal into my house, to teach my wife disobedience and deception."

"Mr. Fraser, Mr. Fraser, how can you insult my mother?" exclaimed his wife, pale as marble, and trembling with emotion, as she interposed between them, and embraced Mrs. Herbert.

"She shall go this moment, this very moment," screamed he, "or I will send for the police, and consign her to their charge, for entering my house in disguise, and under a fictitious name."

"And if you do," repeated his wife, drawing herself up, with a dignity that seemed to surprise and awe him, "never again will I look on you as other than a cruel tyrant, who, by his unnatural treatment in separating me from my family, has compelled the disguise and the deception he would now punish so severely."

"My child, he is your husband," said Mrs. Herbert, her trembling lips almost refusing to articulate the words.

"Hypocrite!" exclaimed Mr. Fraser, "would you now again deceive me? who is it that has fostered this audacious spirit in a weak girl, who before you stole like a thief into my house, dared not question my will, nor seek to frustrate it?"

"You know her not. Oh, my mother, that you, who are all goodness, who have exhorted me so strongly to obedience to this cruel man, should be accused of conduct of which you are so wholly incapable! It is your own injustice and violence, Sir, that has conquered my weak submission. There is a point, and every throb of my heart, and every pang of my wounded feelings tell me so, at which submission would be base and unworthy. Let my mother leave this house, as it becomes a gentlewoman to do, and permit me to occasionally see and hear from her and my sisters, and you will find me in everything else as submissive as before."

"Never, never. Rather would I see you

dead at my feet; rather know that my resolution had killed you, than consent to this. I command your mother to leave my house this instant, and never more to pass its doors."

Mrs. Herbert pressed her child to her heart, pronounced a blessing on her head, and resigning the fainting Mrs. Fraser to the arms of Selina, hastily left the room, followed by her ruthless son-in-law, uttering the most cutting reproaches while she put on her cloak and bonnet, and not losing sight of her until she left the house. He then returned to his wife's chamber; who, hardly restored to consciousness, lay extended on the sofa, where Selina had placed her. She shuddered at his approach, and this involuntary symptom of dread and dislike increased his anger.

"When your scheming mother descends to assuming a disguise and false name," said he sternly, "she should be more careful about her letters. Look here; I found this epistle on the stairs; it fell out of the envelope, which was addressed to her by her false name, and, urged by an irresistible impulse, I perused it,

and discovered the cheating that had been practised. This, however, shall never occur again. I will remove you from the reach of your family. I will take you out of England; and it will depend on yourself, whether I overlook the insubordination you exhibited this morning, or not. Have Mrs. Fraser's clothes packed up," said he to Selina, "for we shall leave England at once. But stay," added he, "were you privy to the plan of Mrs. Herbert for entering my house in disguise? who hatched the project? was it Mrs. Fraser, or her mother?"

"Mrs. Herbert, believing her daughter's life to be in danger, and trembling with anxiety for her, sought to attend her as nurse. Mrs. Fraser was wholly ignorant of the deception, until it was accidentally discovered, some time after Mrs. Herbert was in the house."

"You confess, then, that you were aware that the pretended nurse was Mrs. Herbert, yet you made no communication of that fact to me!"

"I saw Mrs. Fraser's health derive such

benefit from the care of her mother, that I dared not interfere," replied Selina, timidly.

"Then you cannot be surprised that I at once dismiss you from my wife's service. Leave my house forthwith."

"What! send away the only person who can be of use to me," said my gentle mistress. "You cannot surely be so cruel, in my present weak state, too!" and tears flowed down her face.

"There shall be no confederates in my house, to aid and abet the schemes carried on against my peace," observed her brutal husband. "I will have only those about you whom I can depend on, who will consult *my* wishes, and not your's. The sooner you leave the house the better," continued he, addressing Selina. "Come with me, and deliver up your mistress's jewels and valuables. The housekeeper can wait on you," added he, turning to his weeping wife, "until a suitable attendant is found for you."

Selina approached Mrs. Fraser, pressed her trembling hand to her lips, and breathed a

prayer for her, and then, filled with pity and regret, hurried from the room, leaving her mistress bitterly weeping. She rendered up to Mr. Fraser the costly jewels, and other valuables in her charge, he carefully counting out each, according to the inventory of them delivered to her on entering the house. When this ceremony was finished, he paid her the salary due; and, relaxing a little from his sternness, offered her a present.

"No, Sir, I can accept nothing from one who thinks ill of me," observed Selina; but, before I depart, pardon me if I warn you that you are trifling with your own happiness, that you will destroy the health of Mrs. Fraser. If you had listened, as I did, Sir, to the excellent counsel Mrs. Herbert gave her daughter, how different would your thoughts be of her! Be assured that never did two more admirable women exist than Mrs. Herbert and Mrs. Fraser, or more deserving of happiness."

"What bribe have they given you for this fulsome praise?" demanded the terrible old man, his sallow face assuming an expression of

cunning, mingled with dislike; "and when, pray, has it become the usage for ladies' maids to take on themselves to give their opinions on family affairs to their masters?"

Selina attempted no reply to this speech; but, making him a curtsey, descended the stairs, left the house, and walking to the nearest stand of coaches, entered one, and was driven to her kind friend Mrs. Steadfast's, where she met with a most cordial reception, and would have felt comfortable, could she but forget the unhappy fate of her late charming and interesting mistress, whose thraldom filled her with the deepest pity and regret. In two days after, she read in the 'Morning Post," among the list of fashionable movements, the departure of Mr. and Mrs. Fraser, from Grosvenor-square, for the Continent, and sighed, as she reflected how sad and painful such a journey must be to the poor young creature, leaving all dear to her behind, and with so stern and tyrannical a companion. "Alas!" thought Selina, "her's is, indeed, a splendid misery, from which I can foresee no release. Her husband will probably live long

enough to preclude all happiness. Her youth will wear away under his galling yoke, or else she will sink into a premature grave, the victim of his cruelty!"

In a few days after, the inquiries of Mrs. Steadfast, made at the request of Selina, in search of a new situation, were crowned with success. The young and beautiful Duchess of Glenallen, whose name figured continually in the newspapers of the day, as the observed of all observers, the leader of the *ton*, the glass of fashion, required a *femme de chambre*, or rather, something between an humble companion and a lady's maid. A milliner, who was employed by her grace, and who happened to be a near relative of Mrs. Steadfast's, named the subject to her, and offered to recommend Selina, who, the bearer of a letter from the *modiste*, proceeded the following day to Glenallen House, and was admitted to the presence of its noble mistress. The remarkable beauty and aristocratic air of the youthful Duchess greatly struck Selina, but the natural dignity of the high-born lady was so tempered by a gracious-

ness of look and manner, that at once captivated those of an inferior station who approached her, that the grandeur of the stately Duchess was forgotten in the feminine softness of the beautiful woman. When, in answer to her grace's inquiries, Selina informed her of the cause of her having left her last situation, the Duchess looked even more kindly at her than before. "Poor Mrs. Fraser, how much I pity her!" said the Duchess. "You were quite right not to have betrayed her and her unfortunate mother to that dreadful old man. I might, I suppose, refer to Mrs. Herbert for a testimonial of your abilities, not that I in the least doubt them."

"Certainly, your grace."

The letter was written, and, in due time, a most satisfactory answer was received, accompanied by a note for Selina, filled with expressions of gratitude and kindness for her devotion to her late mistress, and regret at Mrs. Fraser's having lost so faithful an attendant.

Selina now entered on her new duties, and her gentle mistress lightened them by her amia-

bility. She had been some days in the splendid establishment, at Glenallen House, before she saw its master, every hour increasing her admiration for the Duchess.

One morning the Duke's valet tapped at the dressing-room door, and requested to be informed when his grace could be favoured with an interview by the Duchess.

When Selina delivered the message, the Duchess changed colour, and an expression of annoyance overspread her beautiful face. "Tell him I will see the Duke in an hour," said she; and then she leaned her cheek on her hand, and remained a few minutes absorbed in reflection, evidently of a painful nature, if the curved brow and compressed lips might be taken as proofs of chagrin. "Give me a glass of water, and drop some sal volatile into it, my good Miss Stratford," said her grace.

Selina did as she was told, and the Duchess, having drank the contents of the glass, sighed deeply, and, making an effort to resume her self-composure, commenced the duties of her toilette.

From the first day that she entered the house, Selina had been struck by the unequal spirits of her noble mistress, but she had never witnessed her evince such visible signs of painful emotion as since the interview with her lord had been requested. Frequent sighs heaved her exquisite bust, and an impatience in submitting to being attired, never previously noticed by her attendant, certified that the expected visit was anything but agreeable to her. Her toilette completed, she looked at the *pendule* on the mantel-piece, and seeing that the hour was arrived when the Duke might be expected, she told Selina to take in her bouquet and salts to the boudoir, and place them on the table near her *bergère;* and she then betook herself there.

When Selina, having fulfilled her lady's behest, was leaving the boudoir, an aged and infirm gentleman entered it. She drew back to allow him to pass, concluding that he must be some relation, perhaps the grandsire of the Duke or Duchess. Of tall stature, though bent by age, there was something peculiarly

aristocratic in the appearance and bearing of this old gentleman. "I fear I have disturbed you earlier than your accustomed hour of leaving your chamber, Duchess," said he, with an air of perfect good breeding.

"It is of no consequence," was the reply; but the tone in which it was uttered was so unlike the usually bland one of the fair Duchess, that Selina was impressed with a conviction that the person to whom the words were addressed did not stand in the relation to her mistress that she had supposed. No, to a parent of either herself or her husband, more respect, or warmth of manner, would have been shown. Selina left the room, wondering whether it could be possible that the foppish old gentleman she had seen could be the Duke of Glenallen? but there was such a disparity of years between him and the Duchess, that she could hardly bring herself to think so. She had heard from a Frenchwoman, who had been the *femme-de-chambre* of the deceased mother of the Duchess, and who, having also served that lady herself before her marriage,

was still, though past her labour, retained in the establishment as an humble friend and favourite of her noble mistress, that her Grace was an heiress of great wealth; and this circumstance seemed to render her marriage with one so very much her senior still more improbable.

On entering the dressing-room, she found that Madame Fanchon was there, to pay her diurnal visit to the Duchess. "Ah! Mademoiselle, where is Madame la Duchesse?" demanded she.

Selina informed her of the summons that had called her mistress so much earlier than usual from her chamber, and mentioned having seen an old gentleman in the boudoir.

"Dat is de Duke, Mademoiselle, have you not seen him before? *ah! mon Dieu!* he vill make her ill; I am sure he vill. He alvays does ven her asks an *entrevue—Cher Ange! quel malheur* to have a bad old man for husband." Then, as if conscious of her indiscretion, the Frenchwoman resumed, "You look good Mademoiselle, you have de education,

and are not like dose giddy young vomen, who chatter, chatter, and repeat vhatever dey do hear," forgetting that she, herself, had just given a proof of indiscretion, which rendered her comment on the gossiping propensities of other *femmes-de-chambres* somewhat out of place; "I may derefore say vat I tink to you, Mademoiselle, vidout being afraid you tell to all de vorld, and it *is* a great comfort to be able to open de mous, and let out all de triste triste toughts dat do press on de heart, and veigh it down."

Selina bowed assent to the observation; and encouraged by this, the old Frenchwoman was evidently about to give expression to her long hoarded-up grievances, when the Duchess entered the room, her face flushed, and her whole air denoting discomposure. Her Grace, nevertheless, assumed a more calm demeanour when she saw her old servant, "Ah! *ma bonne* Fanchon, how are you? the rheumatic pains better, I hope?"

"A leetle, a leetle, *cher ange*. But you, you not look like yourself, not happy?"

"I am only hurried, my good Fanchon, I

must return to the Duke, who is waiting for me in the boudoir;" and so saying, the Duchess drew a gold key from a chain that was inside her dress, opened her *escritoire*, took out a banker's book, wrote a cheque, and having replaced the book, returned to the boudoir, kindly nodding to the old Frenchwoman, and saying "*A demain, ma bonne* Fanchon, *à demain.*"

"Ah! I do guess vat all dat means. Bad old man! alvays vanting money. He vill ruin her if he live long; and she, *cher ange*, pays dear for de *liberté* to do vat she please. Bad man! bad man!"

All this seemed strange to Selina; but though her curiosity was strongly excited, she would not, on any account, question the old woman, who, apparently, only waited for a little encouragement, to disclose all she knew.

In a few days after, a letter, with a black seal and deep mourning edges, was delivered to Selina; and great was her astonishment when the signature revealed to her that it came from her late mistress, Mrs. Fraser, and

announced that she was now, a (not inconsolable) widow. Yet there was no levity, no elation in the tone of the letter; it said that poor Mr. Fraser (how often is the term "poor" applied to the worthless dead!) had died of an attack of gout in the stomach, in France, ten days after he had reached that country; that she had returned to England with the remains of her late husband, and was now, blessed with the society of her mother and sisters, who had taken up their abode with her, passing the first weeks of her widowhood in seclusion. She ended by saying that she longed to see Selina, whose devoted kindness she never had forgotten, and never could forget.

Selina obtained permission to go and see her former mistress.

"I hope, my good Stratford, that she will not seduce you from me," said the Duchess kindly, "for I assure you I should consider such an event as a real misfortune, so well do you suit me in every possible way."

"And I, your Grace, am so deeply impressed with your indulgent goodness, that with all my

attachment for Mrs. Fraser, I should grieve to leave your service for hers; now that with her good mother and sisters, and released from the tyranny of so harsh and stern a husband, she can no longer, as formerly, stand in need of me."

"Then unhappiness is the strongest claim to your services, my good Selina?" said the Duchess.

"I did not mean to say so, your Grace," replied Selina, blushing, and looking embarrassed.

"Don't deny the sentiment that is so honourable to you, my good Stratford," observed the Duchess, sighing deeply, "and let me hope you will long remain with me."

CHAPTER IV.

Selina found Mrs. Fraser looking beautiful in her widow's weeds. Never had she appeared to greater advantage; for the grave reflections which the late unexpected event had produced in her mind, had lent a serious, if not a sad expression to her lovely face. Her reception of Selina was full of grateful affection; nor was that of her mother and sisters less cordial. They duly appreciated the consolation she had been to Mrs. Fraser; and the constancy with which she had borne insult from him, who was no more a denizen on earth, rather than betray the confidence reposed in her. How altered was now the aspect of that house, formerly resembling nothing so much as a gilded prison; where no light footstep was ever heard, no voice of gladness ever sounded;

where every one, save its stern gaoler, moved stealthily through the mansion, afraid to awaken an echo; and where he, like some fabled sorcerer of romance, seemed to cast a spell over all, to destroy the peace he could not himself enjoy. Now, although a becoming gravity pervaded the abode, that no sounds of rejoicing, no loud knocks of visitors were heard, and no symptoms of feasting or mirth seen, to announce the recovered freedom of its young and beautiful mistress from the state of intolerable thraldom in which she had been held; there were unmistakeable proofs of peace, if not of happiness. The doting mother could now, fearless, press her child to her heart, and lavish on her those attentions dictated by affection. The duteous daughter could repay them by her tenderness; and the fair and gentle sisters, who had wept so many tears at being separated from the lovely being, to whom they were now re-united, basked in her soft smiles, even although those smiles were less frequent, and less joyous than their own. The youthful widow had witnessed death, and in his hours

of suffering had pardoned, nay, more, had pitied, and would have saved her husband, had it been in her power. The possession of vast wealth, bequeathed to her by the departed, in the spirit of atonement for pain often inflicted, and patient endurance of it, joined to an unremitting care and attention to soothe the bed of sickness and death, had not dazzled her; yes, he, the stern, the obdurate old man, had died blessing her; and she could not look around on the solid comforts and splendour that surrounded her, without remembering that she owed them all to *him*, whose cold remains were so lately consigned to the grave.

Mr. Fraser had bequeathed his widow all he possessed; and the first use she made of her great wealth, was to secure a noble independence to her mother and sisters. The house was redolent of the perfume of flowers, and the carol of birds, the property of the fair sisters, transported there from their former abode. Every implement of feminine occupation had a place in the *salons* formerly so gloomy. Books were within reach on every *guéridon* and table;

and gentle voices, and loving words, and sweet smiles, gave that indefinable charm peculiar to an abode inhabited by young, accomplished, and amiable women; and presided over by one so capable of superintending it as Mrs. Herbert.

"I wish, dear Selina, you could return to me," said Mrs. Fraser. "I should so like to have you, who shared my trials, partake my present ——," happiness, she was going to say; but she paused, as the word rose to her lip, and, blushing deeply, added, "No, I must not say happiness; it would be ungrateful to the *dead*,—to *him*, through whose generosity I am enabled to enjoy the manifold comforts around me, and the greatest of all, the society of my dear mother and sisters! If you had seen him, as I did, through his fatal malady, Selina, you would, like me, forget that he was ever harsh and austere, and remember only his regret for past failings, and the kindness evinced at the last. I cannot"— and a tear which stole down her cheek, marked the truth of the assertion— "enjoy the advantages his generosity have

secured me, without regretting that they have been acquired by his death."

"If you possessed not dear relatives, who are so certain to promote your happiness as to render it independent of my poor services, I would leave any situation to return to you, dear Mrs. Fraser; but as, happily, you now require not my attention, I cannot leave my present mistress, whose health, by no means good, and whose spirits unequal, render my attention acceptable."

"But you will come to see me, dear Selina, whenever you can; will you not? Be assured that, in me, as well as in my dear mother and sisters, you shall ever find true and constant friends. You must not refuse to accept a slight proof of my regard;" and Mrs. Fraser arose from her sofa, opened her *escritoire,* and taking from it a bank note, forced it into the hand of Selina. "Remember that, in all circumstances and in all times, you may count on me," resumed the lovely and gentle being; "and that under my roof you will ever find a welcome and a home when you desire it."

The mother and sisters of Mrs. Fraser were no less kind than herself to Selina, who left the house filled with gratitude at having secured such friends.

A growing good-will by degrees sprung up between the worthy old Frenchwoman and Selina. The former soon perceived that Mademoiselle, as she called her, was far superior to any person in her station with whom she had hitherto been brought into contact; that she possessed none of the vulgar and idle curiosity, peculiar to *femmes de chambre;* and that she performed her functions in the service of the Duchess more as a labour of love than a mere discharge of them for profit. Adoring the Duchess, the good woman felt disposed to love all who sympathized in her affection for that bright and beautiful being, while she resented, as a personal injury, any symptom of coldness, or a less fervent admiration for her than her own. The Duke's name was never mentioned in her presence without its producing a change in her countenance, a deep sigh, almost amounting to a groan, or an impatient shrug of the

shoulders. "Ah, if you knew all, Mademoiselle, how you would pity *ce cher ange!*" would the Frenchwoman say; "and yet, dat one vid such beauty, such talents, such fortune, and high birt, should, trough de vickedness of oders, become an object of pity, instead of one of pride, to dose who know her, almost breaks my old heart. No day does pass dat I do not tremble for her. Vid her varm heart, no von to love, whom it is not a sin, a crime to love. *O, mon Dieu,* vhere vill all dis end! All de vorld is at her feet. She is so beautiful, dat all de men adore her; and so leetle vain, dat de vomen forgive her for her beauty. Her husband does not advise, does not varn her; he leaves her to float about in de dangerous sea of fashion, like a ship dat has no von to steer its course, to point out de rocks and de quicksands dat may destroy it. She is so young, *pauvre cher ange,* she not know de vorld at all; and if she do vat is wrong, vat is crime, she vill von day avake to such misery, dat it vill kill her, or—she vill kill herself."

Such were the reflections that used to burst

from the over-burthened heart of the old French-woman, and fill that of Selina with pity and dread. Often, when she answered the summons of the Duchess's bell in the morning, she found her with heavy eyes and pallid cheeks, that betrayed that tears more frequently filled up the hours of night than sleep; and although, when she paid her daily visit in the dressing-room, the Duchess would endeavour to conceal her depression of spirits under the mask of affected gaiety, she could not impose on her old and faithful servant, who during the rest of the day would be wretched.

Though extremely attached to her, it was evident that the Duchess avoided a *téte-à-téte* with Madame Fanchon. Was it that she dreaded the remonstrances of the privileged old creature, who had been more the humble friend than servant of the mother whose memory she still fondly cherished, as well as her own devoted attendant since her birth? Whatever the motive might be, it was clear to Selina, that the Duchess invariably avoided a *téte-à-téte* with Fanchon, and made excuses, whenever, as

was often the case, it was solicited. The lowness of spirits increased, the traces of tears became more frequent, and for whole hours the Duchess would sit leaning her head on her hand, so wholly absorbed in reflections,—and painful ones they must have been, judging by the expression of her countenance,—as to be totally unconscious of the presence of Selina. Then she would start from her reverie, look at the *pendule*, dress in a hurry, go to her boudoir, and remain there until her carriage was announced. Sometimes it would remain at the door, the Duchess forgetting it had been ordered, until it was too late to go out; and then, even more dispirited than before, she would enter her dressing-room, to attire herself for some grand dinner at which she was expected to appear, when it was evident she was almost unequal to the fatigue of dressing.

During the long nights that Selina had to sit up for her noble mistress, the old French woman, whose confidence in her discretion had now become quite established, related to her the history of the childhood and girlhood of the

Duchess, without her having given the slightest encouragement to such a measure. So long had her hoarded secrets been shut up in her own heart, not, as it was plain, from discretion, so much as from not having hitherto found a person to whom she thought she could safely confide them, that she now poured them out freely, interspersed with many ejaculations and severe censures on those to whom the Duchess's fate had been confided. We will relate the tale in a less diffuse and more sober style.

The Duchess of Glenallen was left an orphan when only in her fourth year. Her mother, one of the most faultless beings on earth, died in giving her birth; and her father, the Marquis of Oakhampton, followed his beloved wife to the grave, in four years after; leaving his only child one of the richest heiresses in England. Of the two guardians to whose care he bequeathed his child, one died within a few months after the trust had been confided to him; and the other was, as it unfortunately turned out, one of the last persons in whom such a trust should be reposed; being a man

whose indolence and sybarite habits of self-indulgence had, and with good cause, become proverbial. He, lamenting the trouble and responsibility entailed on him by his guardianship, requested a female relation to provide a governess for the infant heiress: the person selected was a weak-headed, good-natured Frenchwoman; who soon became so passionately attached to the little girl, that she lavished on her all the tenderness and indulgence calculated to injure a nature disposed to exert, even at that tender age, a self-will not often seen in children so young.

Madame de Montauban had once been a mother, and lost her daughter at about the same age as the pupil now confided to her care. The little girl had been very beautiful, and her death almost occasioned that of her mother, so intense had been her grief for the loss. Every handsome child of a similar age, ever seen afterwards, reminded the poor bereaved mother of her lost one; nay, she fancied she could trace a striking resemblance in each to her departed Julie. In the little Lady Louisa

Evermond, this fancied resemblance struck Madame de Montauban more than ever; hence she abandoned herself to an adoration for her that amounted to little less than idolatry. The clever child soon perceived the influence she had acquired over her weak governess, and exercised it, if not rudely or violently, with a pertinacity that never failed to carry whatever point she was bent on obtaining; and, as Madame de Montauban never combated her self-will, the poor erring woman remained unconscious that her pupil could be indocile if resisted.

The *femme de chambre* of her late mother was, by desire of the Marchioness, always to remain with her daughter; and as she transferred all the affection she had borne to her late mistress to the child, it is not to be wondered at, that Lady Louisa grew up wholly unaccustomed to the slightest constraint, and was disposed to give, instead of to receive the law from her governess. Lord Maplebury, the relative to whom her guardianship now devolved, had, to spare future trouble to himself,

decided that Madame de Montauban should continue to fill the same post near Lady Louisa, when that young lady advanced to girlhood, that she was to occupy during the childhood of her pupil. Hence there was no chance for the over-indulged girl finding, when she entered her teens, a governess who might correct the errors engendered by her predecessor. Had any one told Madame de Montauban that she was injuring her pupil by her injudicious indulgence, and irrational mode of bringing her up, she would not only have resented such a charge with indignation, but would have been convinced of its utter injustice.

She loved Lady Louisa so fondly, was so vain of her beauty, and accomplishments, that she never imagined the possibility that even the most fastidious critic could detect aught to find fault with in a creature so lovely and amiable. The truth was, the defects in her pupil were so seldom called into action, that Madame de Montauban, herself a very sweet-tempered, kind-hearted woman, was, if not wholly unconscious of their existence, at

least far from being acquainted with their extent: yielding a ready assent to most, if not all the wishes of the young lady, no occasion was afforded for the exhibition of ill-humour or frowardness; or if some symptoms of petulance were occasionally suffered to appear, their duration was so brief, and the *amende*, in redoubled marks of affection, so quickly followed, that they were soon forgotten.

Lady Louisa Evermond was passionately fond of music, and required no stimulus to urge her to devote the due time and attention necessary for becoming a proficient in it. Drawing was to her a positive pleasure, instead of an irksome task. Reading she delighted in, because the books furnished for her perusal were much more calculated to amuse than to instruct; hence, the governess congratulated herself on having the most docile pupil in the world; and boasted that "*ce cher ange* never gave her the least trouble, but was quite as desirous to pursue her studies, as *she* could be to incite her to them."

Lady Louisa was not like the generality of

over-indulged young persons, ungrateful, or ungracious to her governess. On the contrary, if she neither feared nor respected her very much, she loved her a great deal; and conscious that Madame de Montauban entertained for her the most devoted affection, warmly repaid it.

When Lady Louisa Evermond had achieved her sixteenth year, Madame de Montauban was seized by an illness which, after the duration of three weeks, put a period to her existence. It was then that the orphan girl, rich in beauty and in fortune, became sensible, for the first time, of the isolation of her position. The kind friend, who had doted on her to such a degree as to be either blind to her faults or too partial to reprove them, was now no more. She had no longer by her side one who was not only ready to fulfil all her wishes, but who even endeavoured to anticipate them, and who seemed to think she was only sent into the world to save her pupil from every care and annoyance. Deep was the grief of Lady Louisa for her governess. A thousand traits

of the gentleness, fondness, and indulgence of poor Madame de Montauban, were now recalled to her mind, and as many self-reproaches came with them, at remembered slights and offences on her own part; viewed by her, when they occurred, as scarcely meriting blame, but which she would now have given all she possessed to recall. Grief is often a corrective of the errors of youth. It ripens, while it sobers the mind. How far it might have had this beneficial effect on that of Lady Louisa, no opportunity of judging was afforded; for, unfortunately, no sooner was the guardian of that young lady made acquainted with the death of Madame de Montauban, than he applied to a female relative of his to recommend some one to fill her place.

CHAPTER V.

In the course of a week, a lady arrived at the villa, near London, where, for the sake of having masters from the metropolis, the residence of Lady Louisa had been chosen. A more unfortunate selection of a governess to correct the errors engendered by the kind-hearted Frenchwoman could not have been made than in Mrs. Western. Grave and unbending to austerity, a smile or kind word as seldom emanated from the lips of this rigid disciplinarian, as gentle thoughts did from her cold heart. Her stiff carriage and stern countenance made a most disagreeable impression on Lady Louisa, and the harsh tones of her voice achieved it. The natural good breeding of the young lady, led her to make some attempt to do the honours of her house to the stranger,

and the effort was a painful one, for her grief was increased, rather than diminished, when she saw the person who was to take the place of her poor dear Madame de Montauban. She, however, soon regretted that she had taken the trouble of enacting the hostess, when she saw Mrs. Western assume all the airs of a *gouvernante* towards a child of some eight or nine years of age, instead of observing the respectful politeness due to a young lady of nearly double that number of years.

"I trust that your ladyship has not been idle since the death of my predecessor," said Mrs. Western, unceremoniously taking the *bergère* never occupied since Madame de Montaubon had sat in it.

"I have been too much afflicted by the death of the friend of my youth," replied Lady Louisa, and the tremulous movement of her lips, and tones of her voice, bore evidence to the truth of her assertion, "to think of anything but the loss I have sustained."

"I am sorry that the lady I have replaced did not better fulfil her duty, than to leave one

so long under her care, ignorant of the impropriety, nay more, the sin, of dwelling on painful subjects, and of giving way to useless regrets."

"I must beg, Madam,"—and Lady Louisa drew herself up to the utmost altitude of her height,—"that nothing in the shape of a censure may be uttered against one whose death I shall always deplore, and whose memory I shall ever fondly cherish;" and here a passionate burst of tears proved the depth of her emotion.

"Poor young lady," exclaimed Mrs. Western, her cold grey eyes glancing sternly at the weeping and agitated girl before her. "I see that I have much to undo before I can hope to establish that steady equilibrium of mind, without which mortals must ever be the sport of circumstances, and the slaves of their own over-indulged sensibility."

A feeling nearly allied to anger and indignation stopped the tears of Lady Louisa. To shed them before one so heartless and stern, would, she thought, be unworthy of what was due to herself. A presentiment that this was but the commencement of a series of annoy-

ances to be expected from the disagreeable woman before her, and which it would require all her strength of mind and fortitude to resist, flashed through her thoughts, and she became calm and dignified in a moment.

"It may be as well, Madam," said she, "that we should at once come to a perfect understanding with respect to our relative positions, before any thing can occur that may render them disagreeable or offensive. I have entered on my seventeenth year, a period when young women are generally emancipated from the care of a governess; and when, as in my unfortunate case, they are motherless,"—and here her lips again trembled as the recollection of her own isolated position occurred to her,—"the *rôle* of the governess changes to that of *chaperon* or companion, in which light only can I consider you."

"Age, in my opinion, should make no difference in the position of a conscientious governess," replied Mrs. Western. "*Some* young ladies are as much children at sixteen, ay, or even after they have entered their seventeenth

year, as at eight or nine," and here the speaker smiled superciliously; "and consequently require a governess to correct their false notions, and regulate their morbid feelings, quite as much as children do."

"I am not disposed to reason on the hypothesis you have assumed," observed Lady Louisa, proudly, and somewhat maliciously; "if I were, I might say, that with some persons, even the advanced age of half a century does not always preclude errors and defects. I shall simply confine myself to stating that in no other light than as a companion or *chaperon* can I consider you; and that any attempt on your part to enact any other *rôle*, will find me not only refractory but unmanageable."

The pale stern face of Mrs. Western became flushed with anger as she listened to this speech. She had been told by the lady who had recommended her to the guardian of Lady Louisa, as a fit person to replace Madame de Montauban, that she must be prepared to find her pupil a high-spirited, spoilt child, whom it would be her duty to correct, and bring to reason.

"Firmness and severity are the only weapons that will enable you to conquer the haughty and ungovernable character of this young lady," said Mrs. Austin, "and if you wish to fulfil your duty, you must not be sparing of either."

Be it known to our readers that Mrs. Austin, the giver of this counsel, and near relative of Lord Maplebury, the guardian of Lady Louisa Evermond, had her own motives for urging Mrs. Western to harshness, and severity towards her future pupil. The Duke of Glenallen, an old and profligate voluptuary, whose fortune had sustained as much injury from the ruinous extravagance in which he had through a long course of years indulged, as his constitution had from the dissipation to which he had abandoned himself, was now anxious to barter his title for wealth, and to find some young and lovely being, who, for the sake of the ducal coronet which he could place on her brow, would consent to soothe his declining years, and sacrifice her youth and beauty to age and infirmity. But where was this *rara avis* to be found?

Loveliness without wealth would not suit him, and wealth without beauty would not satisfy him. To Mrs. Austin, an old friend, the Duke confided his wants and wishes only a month before the death of Madame de Montauban; and it instantly occurred to her, that through her influence with her relative, Lord Maplebury, she might assist in arranging a marriage between the Duke and his ward, Lady Louisa Evermond. To be sure, such a union could not fail to be considered most disproportionate. So young, so lovely, and so rich as the lady was, she could not, the moment she entered society, escape being sought by a train of suitors, whose claims to her regard would leave those of the aged Duke immeasurably behind. She must therefore be sought and won before she entered the great world—but how was this to be accomplished? attended as she ever was by her fond and watchful governess, who never quitted her side, and who had keenness of apprehension enough quickly to discover the views of those around her, and to defeat them the moment she deemed it necessary. The Lady

Louisa was so happy, too, with her kind and doting governess, that she could have no inducement, save love, almighty love, for wishing to change her situation. So great, too, was the notion entertained by Madame de Montauban, of the merits of her beautiful *élève*, that there were few men, whatever their deserts might be, that she would consider worthy of becoming her husband. How little chance, then, could the old and infirm Duke have to conciliate her good opinion, or to blind her to the utter unsuitableness of such a marriage! No, Mrs. Austin saw there was no hope of success in that quarter, and had abandoned the project, when Lord Maplebury called on her to announce the death of Madame de Montauban, and to request her to find a successor for that lady.

"But you must remember, my good cousin," said Mrs. Austin, "that Lady Louisa is now past sixteen, and that she requires a *dame de compagnie* rather than a governess."

"Call her what you will, *dame de compagnie*, *chaperon*, governess, anything, provided I am

not to be troubled. Really my health and habits will not permit me to be harassed."

"Nevertheless, my good cousin, in a few months more you must have this young lady home, must have her presented at Court, fill your house with company, and escort her into public."

"Not for worlds! not for worlds! Don't name such a thing. Why the very notion puts me in a fever. Feel how my hand burns; why did I consent to be named one of her guardians? It was perfect madness. But who could have anticipated that the other two guardians would die, and leave me in for the whole trouble?"

Mrs. Austin was more than half tempted to offer to relieve her cousin from the charge which weighed so heavily upon him, and to say that *she* would undertake to receive Lady Louisa under her roof; but the dread of this proposal being rejected, checked her, for she knew that Lord Maplebury was disposed to suspicion, and liked to defeat the projects of those whom he thought had any design on him. She recol-

lected, too, that *he* knew she was in embarrassed circumstances, for he had more than once come forward to her aid with considerable sums; hence she fancied that he would attribute her offer of receiving his ward to its true cause, —an interested motive.

"Yes, yours, my dear cousin, is in truth a troublesome task, and it is a pity you ever undertook it. But you are so kind-hearted, so unselfish, that you are prone to think only of others, and to forget and forego your own comfort."

Perhaps in the whole circle of her acquaintance Mrs. Austin knew not an individual as selfish as Lord Maplebury; and so perfectly convinced was she of this fact, that had she been called on to name the person the most engrossed by self, her cousin would have instantly occurred to her mind. With this conviction, it required no little hypocrisy to utter the compliment she had just pronounced, and no slight confidence in the weakness and vanity of him to whom it was addressed, to suppose it would be acceptable. But when was flattery

found to be unacceptable? and the knowledge of mankind, evinced on this occasion by the artful and designing Mrs. Austin, was repaid by the complacency of the peer.

"You are right," replied he, "I *do* trouble myself too much about others, and after all, *à quoi bon*? One never gets any return for it, no gratitude. Why, would you believe it, it was only last week that my rascal of a cook refused to take physic, although I put myself into a fever in endeavouring to persuade him."

"How good and kind of you!"

"The soups and *entrées* for three days before proved to me that his palate had lost its delicacy of taste, *ergo*, he required physic. I sent for my doctor, had Beauplat examined, and a medicine was ordered for him; the rascal positively refused to take it; nay, only fancy his ingratitude, when I endeavoured to persuade him, the fellow said that he was sure I cared not a rush about his health, and only thought of my own dinner. There's gratitude for you! After that, busy yourself about the health of your servants! In the same way,

there's Janillion, my *maitre d'hôtel*, who has a cough, the very sound of which attacks my nerves so much, that I am forced to order him out of the room; and when I said he must either get cured or leave my service, the fellow had the coolness to tell me that in France an old servant was never discharged because he was ill, and insinuated that I thought more of my own ears being annoyed by his cough, than of his lungs suffering."

"How shocking! But this comes from your being too good, too kind; indeed it does."

"I believe you are right, cousin. But let us now think of the person who is to be sent to replace Madame de Montauban. Do you know of any one?"

"Yes, I do know a lady, very highly recommended; and your ward, by all accounts, requires a very superior person, for I have heard that she is extremely self-willed and unmanageable."

"Not more so, I dare say, than the rest of her sex. You are all self-willed and unmanageable, cousin, which is the reason that I have never married."

"You are determined on not bringing Lady Louisa to your house, which you ought to do, or else find a home for her, with some single lady of good family, who could present her in society."

"We'll think of that in another year. It will be quite time enough. There's no hurry. Many girls are not presented until eighteen; and an heiress ought to be introduced into the world rather later than sooner than any other young women."

"Well, then, I will at once engage Mrs. Western. Shall I send her to have an interview with you, and take your instructions?"

"On no accouut. I leave all the arrangements to you. Give her all the instructions you think necessary, but don't let me have any more trouble on the subject."

CHAPTER VI.

Mrs. Western was engaged, and despatched, after having received the advice and instructions of Mrs. Austin to rule her pupil with a firm hand, and not, on any account, to give way to her in a single point. "If you do, your stay will be short, I can assure you," were the last words of Mrs. Austin, when she bade her farewell. How well disposed Mrs. Western was to follow this counsel, her first interview with Lady Louisa proved. But the disposition to tyrannize increased every day, as her natural acerbity of temper was aroused into action by the dignified coldness with which her attempts to control the young lady were met. The home, hitherto so cheerful and happy, was now rendered unbearable to Lady Louisa; who, before a fortnight had elapsed after the arrival

of Mrs. Western, felt herself compelled to write to her guardian, to request the dismissal of that person.

Lord Maplebury was suffering under a slight attack of gout, when his ward's letter reached him; and having read only the signature, he instantly despatched it to Mrs. Austin, who perused it with no slight satisfaction, as every line bore testimony how faithfully *her* instructions to Mrs. Western had been carried into effect. "Yes, my scheme works well," thought she. "I saw that Mrs. Western was a short-sighted fool, as well as an ill-tempered woman; had she not been so, she would have neglected my advice, and conciliated the good-will of Lady Louisa, who could so well repay her indulgence hereafter; and I almost feared she would. But now all is right, and it only remains for me to see the Duke of Glenallen, and make my own terms for securing him the hand of the fair heiress.

The terms were made; Mrs. Austin was not only permitted, but incited, to render the position of Lady Louisa insupportable; no

answers were returned to the letters of complaint addressed to her guardian, who never read a single one of them; and who was told by Mrs. Austin, to whom he sent them, that the fault was all on the side of his ward, and that Mrs. Western must not be interfered with. Meanwhile, the Duke of Glenallen was advised by his confidante to take a villa, the grounds of which joined those of the one occupied by Lady Louisa. Here his Grace had opportunities of seeing the lovely heiress during her daily walks; and such was the impression made by her beauty on his susceptible heart, that even her fortune, greatly as he stood in need of it, became only a secondary object in his mind. He found means, through his *valet de chambre,* to corrupt the housemaid of Lady Louisa, who nightly placed a letter, breathing the most passionate vows of love, on the pillow of the young lady, whose youth and inexperience rendered her unconscious of the impropriety of the measure. Had Madame de Montauban been alive, the first letter would have been at once shown to her by her pupil;

but such was the treatment she had experienced at the hands of Mrs. Western, that she was determined to repose no confidence in her. The love-letters were therefore kept a secret; and, truth to say, were perused with pleasure by one who felt that she stood alone in the world, and had no friend to protect her from the insulting tyranny of Mrs. Western.

About this time a new proof of the desire to vex and control Lady Louisa was given by her *femme de chambre* being discharged, without even a cause being alleged for so arbitrary a measure. Mademoiselle Fanchon had been, as we previously stated, with her since her birth; had been her mother's maid, and doted on her young mistress. Madame de Montauban, who valued and esteemed her, had always treated her with great kindness and consideration, and Lady Louisa was greatly attached to her. This last fact was the sole cause of her dismissal; and Lady Louisa, who felt it to be so, shed many tears, when she saw her humble but faithful friend driven from her house.

The Duke of Glenallen, who, through his

valet, was made acquainted with every thing that occurred in the establishment of Lady Louisa, sought an interview with Madame Fanchon, the day of her dismissal. He encouraged her complaints, conciliated her good will, and took so lively an interest in the fate of her young lady, that the old Frenchwoman, captivated by his urbanity and condescension, and above all, by the purity with which he spoke her own language, lent a willing ear to his advice.

"Go to Lord Maplebury," said the duke, "see him, and tell him all you have told me. He will, he must, release Lady Louisa from the tyranny under which she now pines, and replace you with her."

Well did the duke know that Madame Fanchon's visit to Lord Maplebury would produce no effect; but he had his own motives in urging it. "If you do not succeed in righting your charming mistress, we will then see what can be done to free her."

Madame Fanchon adopted this counsel; was told Lord Maplebury was engaged, and could

see no one. A long letter which she wrote, inclosing one from Lady Louisa, was, like all the former ones, sent to Mrs. Austin; and after waiting a few days, Madame Fanchon again sought an interview with the Duke of Glenallen, who was, she now considered, the only friend her poor young lady or herself had in the world. A less simple-minded woman than Madame Fanchon, might well have been deceived into this belief; so artfully and skilfully did the old *roué* enact his part.

"What can be done, my good Madame?" demanded he; "you see it is useless to expect any amelioration in your poor dear young lady's terrible position from Lord Maplebury. Has she no other friend, no relation from whom she can claim protection?"

"Alas! no."

"Does any plan suggest itself to you, Madame?"

"Only one, your Grace, and that is *la dernière ressource*. It is for Miladi to elope vid me. I have some monies, several hundreds of pounds, left me by her dear dead moder, and de savings

of my vages. On dis Miladi could live in a little cottage, until she comes of age, and I vill be her *femme de chambre, femme de charge, cuisinière* and every ting, until she is twenty-vone."

The duke shook his head, and said, "You forget, Madame, that Lady Louisa's reputation might be compromised by such a step, and more, that her guardian would have the right to reclaim her."

"*Bon Dieu!* den dere is no vay to save *ma chère* Miladi?"

"Yes, there is *one* way, and but *one;* and yet there are many objections to it."

"But if it is de only vay, ve must take it."

"It is for me to free Lady Louisa by making her my wife."

Madame Fanchon started with such undissembled astonishment, that the old *roué*, whose skill in the arts of the toilette, and in concealing the ravages of time, had, he hoped, given him the appearance of a man at least twenty years younger than he really was, felt hurt and mortified.

"It is true, I am not so youthful a suitor as Lady Louisa might expect," observed his Grace; "but my rank, my fortune, render me in all other respects a most eligible *parti;* and after all, I can see no other mode of freeing her. If I did, be assured, Madame, I would not have suggested this one; for however great the attractions of Lady Louisa, and I hear they are very powerful, I have no desire to marry, and pity for her cruel position has alone prompted my proposal."

"Yes, yes, you speak vat is right. It is de only vay to save *ma pauvre maîtresse.* To live nearly five years more vid dat horrid Madame Vestern is too terrible to be tought of. Yes, yes, de only ting is to marry. But how is it to be done?"

"Leave all that to me. I will obtain a special licence, have a female relation of high rank in a chaise and four on the road outside the garden of Lady Louisa's villa; you will be on the spot to accompany your lady to my house in London, where my chaplain will be in readiness to bestow on us the nuptial benediction."

"But vill Miladi Louisa consent to go vid you, to marry you," demanded Madame Fanchon, looking doubtingly.

"I hope she will; for what else can she do? You had better write her a letter, stating all I have now told you, Madame."

"It is no use; dat horrid Madame Vestern vill not allow a letter to reach Miladi. *Hélas! Hélas!* vat a *pénible position!*"

"Write the letter, nevertheless, and I will see if I cannot find means to convey it. I really feel such pity for this young lady, that there is nothing I would not attempt, to rescue her."

Madame Fanchon's letter, enclosed in a passionate one from the Duke, urging an elopement and marriage, as the sole mode of freeing herself from the shackles of Mrs. Western, reached Lady Louisa safely. She still hesitated whether she should adopt the alternative proposed; but some fresh acts of aggression on the part of her *gouvernante*, the following day, decided her. The next night, when all in the house slept save the housemaid, the youthful heiress, escorted by that person, left the villa for

ever, and in a few minutes she found herself in the arms of her faithful Fanchon, who led her to the carriage of the Lady Isabella Villeroy, the sister of the Duke of Glenallen, who received her with an affectionate warmth that greatly soothed and reassured her drooping spirits. They proceeded to London, and stopped at the mansion of the Lady Isabella, where every thing had been prepared for their reception.

"Here, my sweet sister,—for so you must permit me to call you; to-morrow you will be really so," said Lady Isabella Villeroy,—"you will find an end of the slavery and annoyances you have undergone;" and she embraced Lady Louisa, who now, for the first time, saw her face in the well-lighted drawing-room. Great was her surprise as she looked on a countenance that bore evident marks that at least half a century had passed over it, leaving many deep furrows traced by its progress. There was something incongruous (to her thinking, at least,) in a girl of little more than sixteen being addressed as a sister, by one who looked old enough to be her grandmother; and then came

the thought of how the Duke, who had looked so handsome, (she had only seen him at a considerable distance,) could have so elderly a sister.

"She is probably by a former marriage, for she must be at least twenty-five years his senior," thought Lady Louisa. "I am sorry that I don't find in his sister a person nearer my own age, of whom I could make a friend. But *he* must be friend and all to me *now*. How beautifully he writes, and what a distinguished air he has! I wonder whether he is really as handsome when near as he appeared at a distance. How romantic, that we should never have met, never have spoken, until we meet at the altar! I never read any thing in a novel so romantic as this!"

Lady Isabella Villeroy had too much quickness of apprehension, not to have remarked the disagreeable impression produced by her age on the mind of her future sister, and too much tact, not to wish to remove it. She spoke of her own bad health, which, as she asserted, made her look many years older than she was, and

added, that although her face had lost the freshness of youth, her heart still preserved it, as her dear sister should find, when they knew each other better. She accompanied Lady Louisa to her chamber, remained with her until Madame Fanchon was dismissed, thus preventing any confidential communication on her part, and was the first in the morning to undraw the curtain of Lady Louisa, whom she left not until they together entered the carriage that was to convey them to Grosvenor Square. The Duke met them in the hall of his mansion, and so admirably had his wig-maker, valet, and tailor performed their parts in getting him up, that at the first glance his future bride felt perfectly satisfied with his appearance. Short lived, however, was her satisfaction; for no sooner did he approach close to her, than, in spite of all the aids of art, she detected the melancholy fact, that her bridegroom was even considerably older than his sister, the Lady Isabella Villeroy. Tall, finely-formed, and free from the *embonpoint* so destructive to the would-be-juvenility of elderly ladies and gentle-

men, the Duke, at a certain distance, was still a very fine-looking man; but had Lady Louisa, following his Grace's example, trusted less to her eyes, and used an opera-glass with a very powerful lens, as he had been wont to do when looking at her walking in the pleasure grounds of her villa, she could not have been mistaken about his age. Sundry deep lines, known by the appellation of crow's-feet, encircled the Duke's eyes, the lids of which, too, were greatly wrinkled, and the orbs themselves were dim and faded. His brow was a map traced by the harsh finger of Time. Nor did the fair and profuse locks that shaded it, render its appearance less ancient. His whiskers were so precisely the same colour as his hair, that they instantly suggested the notion, that not to Nature's cunning hand, but that of a skilful wig-maker did he owe them, and his teeth were so even and regular, that most gentlemen of his age might be tempted to inquire the name of the maker.

Such was the exterior of the Duke of Glenallen, the first man who had awakened a tender

thought in the breast of the young and beautiful Lady Louisa, who now shuddered as he took her hand, drew her trembling arm through his, and led her to the state drawing-room, where an altar had been arranged, near to which his Grace's chaplain, in full canonicals, stood with open book, ready to perform the solemn ceremony that was to unite age and youth, beauty and infirmity, in the indissoluble bond of wedlock.

For a moment the unfortunate and deceived girl felt disposed to refuse to permit the marriage to be solemnized. She trembled at the thought of pronouncing the fatal vows, that were to bind her for ever to the strange being before her! The snowy locks, and toothless gums of age would have been less repugnant to her than the curious specimen of the florid gothic she was contemplating; for age, when no attempt to conceal or disguise it is made, inspires, at least, respect; but "the painted show;" the wrinkled, be-wigged, and be-whiskered, old man by her side; who was smiling, and looking the enraptured lover, excited only

her disgust; and she wished herself back with the tyrannical Mrs. Western, to endure again all the insults heaped on her, rather than become the bride of the Duke. But then came the thought of his kindness—his desire to emancipate her; and, above all, the girlish shame and timidity, which deprived her of the moral courage to decline having the marriage ceremony performed now, when all was prepared for it. No; she felt that she could not avow the truth; she could not acknowledge that it was only while she believed her suitor to be a young man, that his vows were acceptable to her; that she was ready to avail herself of his aid to escape from the severity of Mrs. Western, and the thraldom in which she was held by that tyrannical woman. She must now submit to the fate entailed on her by a tissue of circumstances, over which she had no control; and while shrinking with dismay and disgust from the man who fondly clasped her hand in his, she must pronounce the fatal words that united their destinies. A desperate courage replaced the trembling timidity and fear that,

a minute before, had filled her breast. She suffered the Duke to lead her to the altar; forced herself, although in a voice scarcely audible, to utter the prescribed words; and felt the ring placed on her finger.

She seemed as if in a dream,—a painful, a terrible dream it was! until at the completion of the ceremony, when the bridegroom pressed his lips to hers—those rosy virginal ones, which had never before known the touch of man;—she uttered a faint cry, and would have fallen to the ground had not the Duke supported her. It was some time ere she was restored to consciousness. When she opened her eyes, and saw her husband bending over her on one side of the sofa where she had been placed, and the plain face of his sister on the other, she closed them again with an involuntary shudder, as if to shut out a sight too painful to be borne. A sigh, amounting almost to a groan, burst from her oppressed bosom; and then, summoning all her strength of mind to her aid, she declared herself to be better, and then thanked the Duke and his sister for their kind attention.

CHAPTER VII.

Lord Maplebury's dislike to trouble, prevented him from taking any steps to mark his dissatisfaction at the stolen marriage of his ward. He contented himself, when the intelligence reached him, with giving instructions to his legal advisers, to see that the Duchess's fortune was secured to herself; a measure which the pride and affected disinterestedness of her husband prevented him from disputing; and when Mrs. Austin assured Lord Maplebury that he might consider himself fortunate in being now rid of all trouble about his ward, he was not disposed to question the assertion, or to regret the cause. Mrs. Austin received the sum she had bargained for from the Duke, and Mrs. Western touched a quarter's salary

for the few weeks she had domineered over her late pupil.

The Duke and Duchess of Glenallen left England a few days after their nuptials, and the prolonged *téte-à-têtes*, which travelling afforded them, far from decreasing the dislike of the young and lovely bride to her old husband, only served to increase it to such a degree, that she found it impossible to conceal the symptoms of her repugnance. The *amour propre* of the vain old *roué* became wounded, as daily evidence of his wife's personal distaste towards him was revealed. His ill-temper, which he now took no pains to conceal, achieved the dislike previously excited in the heart of the Duchess, and made her reckless of annoying him. The admiration that followed her wherever she appeared, gratified her vanity; and the discovery that it vexed her jealous lord, only induced her to encourage, still more openly, the attentions of a train of admirers who surrounded her. The fame of her beauty and fascination, with all the spiteful comments that such fame never fails to excite, had spread far

and wide, raising up a host of envious women, and scandal-loving men, prepared to question her claims, if not to admiration, at least to respect, when she returned to England. Her arrival in London produced, in fashionable *parlance*, quite a sensation. The women denied her beauty with a pertinacity and warmth, only to be equalled by that with which the men avowed it to be matchless; and ere the Duchess had been a month in London, the sceptre of beauty and fashion was decreed to her by the suffrages of those who elect a sovereign for the season. The impartiality with which the lovely Duchess received the homage of all her admirers, precluded any jealousy among them, until, in an evil hour, Lord Glastonbury, captivated by her smiles, entered the lists, determined to leave no art untried to make an impression on a heart that had hitherto resisted all who had attempted to subdue it. It would be a feat worthy his ambition, and, *coûte qui coûte*, he would essay it. He studied the tastes and character of the Duchess, and found that

beneath much levity an under-current of strong feeling and romantic sentiment lay hidden, by awakening which, only could her peace be endangered, or her virtue overthrown. He assumed a melancholy air, would sit apart, with his eyes fixed on her face, while other men pressed around her, until by pursuing this line of conduct it attracted her attention, and excited her curiosity. Whenever he caught her glance, he would appear embarrassed, turn away, yet resume his earnest gaze when he thought her unobservant of it; hover near to listen to the sound of her voice, and start as from a deep reverie when spoken to. A perseverance of some weeks in this system was crowned with success. That he admired her, the Duchess felt convinced; his passionate glances, his reserve, his abstraction, proved it more eloquently than all the attentions of the adorers who crowded around her. How much more touching was the passion that sought concealment, and was content to suffer in silence, than the demonstrations, *affichés*, by the herd who offered incense at the shrine of her beauty.

She longed, yet feared to hear him own his love. She already felt there would be more danger in listening to *him*, than in hearing all the flatteries ever previously poured into her ear; yet, in proportion to her dread, became her desire to be assured that her vanity had not misled her, and that she was indeed beloved by one who was capable of feeling the passion with all the fervour and romantic devotion which her youthful imagination pictured, and the absence of which, in her other admirers, had prevented her heart being touched by their adulation and assiduities. Lord Glastonbury, experienced in all the wiles employed by his treacherous sex when they would ensnare the heart of woman, marked with delight the interest he had created, but, fearful of dissipating it, he forbore to approach near to his idol, or to appear conscious that she observed his devotion to her. Like a skilful angler, who tranquilly lets his bait float until his prey is secured on the hook hidden beneath it, he kept at a distance, elated to find that, unmindful of the attentions of her other adorers, the eyes

of the Duchess were continually directed to him, and that she became silent and abstracted in turn. Often did she determine to address him when she passed near where he stood, but as often did her courage fail. A vague presentiment of danger associated itself with his image in her mind, and even this undefined dread invested him with new interest and attraction. When present, he occupied all her attention; when absent, her thoughts continually reverted to him.

Chance sometimes effects that which, without its interference, might remain long in embryo, or never be accomplished. One night, on entering a ball room rather earlier than was her wont, the robe of the Duchess of Glenallen became entangled in the branches of an orange tree placed near a column, against which Lord Glastonbury was leaning. He came to her aid to disengage it.

"I fear I am so awkward," said he in a low voice, his trembling hands betraying his emotion. The Duchess bent down to assist in disentangling the lace from the branch, and

their hands involuntarily met. A deep blush mounted to her very temples, and was succeeded by an extreme paleness.

"Good heavens, you are ill!" whispered Lord Glastonbury, "let me lead you into the conservatory, the cool air there will revive you."

The Duchess took his arm; they walked slowly to the conservatory, and hope beat high in his heart as he felt her white and rounded arm,—which might have served as a model to a sculptor, so exquisite were its proportions,—tremble within his own. The coolness of the conservatory revived her, and they paused at a marble fountain in the centre of it, which threw up its silvery showers towards the roof of glass, through which the bright moon-beams were distinctly seen descending, as if to mingle with the crystal showers. The rich perfume of the plants and flowers, the soothing murmur of the sparkling waters of the fountain, the distant sounds of the music, and the solitude of the spot, had a powerful effect on the feelings of the lovely but thoughtless woman, who, silent

and trembling, dared not meet the impassioned gaze of Lord Glastonbury.

"Is not this a dream," whispered he, as he pressed her hand to his throbbing heart. "How often, loveliest, most adored of women, have I longed for a moment like this to tell you the secret that consumes my heart, that preys on my life. Pity me, oh, most perfect of created beings, and pardon a hopeless passion, pure as the lovely object that has given it birth! Why, why does an indissoluble barrier divide our destinies? We might have loved in innocence, in purity; but now, oh fool that I am to dream, that aught so divine as you could deign to look on one so unworthy as I am! yet, if a love deeper and more devoted than ever before filled the breast of man can merit pity, well do I deserve yours."

The Duchess shuddered, and turned her eyes on her companion for the first time since they had entered the conservatory. Those dark, lustrous eyes were filled with tears, and her face was pale as marble. A presentiment of evil filled her heart; a sense of her own weak-

ness overpowered her. Conscience, even in that moment of passionate love, whispered, that sin and sorrow (when were they ever far asunder?) would be the result of this interview; yet she had not strength to fly from the danger that menaced her. "Would that we had never met!" murmured she.

"Rather say, would that we were never more to part!" whispered her lover.

"Let us leave this place," said the Duchess; and a shudder shook her delicate frame.

"Oh! go not, until you pronounce my pardon for presuming to avow the burning passion that has so long consumed me. Trust me, loveliest of women, your honour is dearer to me than life. You have nought to dread from me. Have I not suffered in silence? have I not avoided, rather than sought you? and would I not have struggled on, enduring all the pangs of a hopeless passion, had not destiny drawn us to-night to this spot? Suffer me to love, to adore you! I ask no sacrifice, I require no reward. Pity, such as angels might accord to erring man, is all I crave; and *that* virtue need

not deny. Only tell me that, had you been free, I might have hoped to aspire to the blessing of calling this hand mine"—and he pressed her snowy hand to his lips—"and I will ask no more."

"Oh! were I free," exclaimed the Duchess, her voice almost choked by emotion, "this hand should be yours, in the sight of God and man!"

"One word more, angel of my life: promise me that, should you ever be free—and the Duke's age precludes not this possibility—promise me that you will be mine, and only mine."

"I promise," whispered the Duchess; "and now, oh! now let us return to the ball room, my absence will be remarked!—yet no, let us not enter the room together. I will go first, and you must go back through the ante-room."

Never previously had the Duchess had occasion to have recourse to a manœuvre like this. Her actions and movements, if open to the charge of levity, were free from even the thought of sin, or the dread of evil interpretation. An hour before, she would have derided the notion of fearing to enter the ball room

with any of the admirers who always fluttered around her; but now she was no longer strong in the proud consciousness of her own innocence; she had listened to the pleadings of a guilty passion—nay more, had avowed a reciprocity; and, sinfully anticipating the death of her husband, had engaged the hand which belonged to him, to another; and conscience whispered to her, that no longer dared she encounter the gaze of the crowd, as hitherto she had been fearlessly wont to do; and that henceforth, every look, every movement, must be guarded, lest she should betray, to the prying eyes of the malignant, the guilty secret of her love. Never, since the day she had approached the hymeneal altar, had she felt so timid, so embarrassed, as when, with unsteady steps, she again entered the ball room. The crowd, the heat, the blaze of light, and the joyous sound of the brisk music, overpowered her so much, that she was glad when one of the train of her admirers came forward, and offered her his arm. And yet, when she had accepted it, she regretted that she had done so, for it seemed like

an infidelity to him on whose arm hers had so lately rested. What would *he* think, should he see her thus familiarly leaning on another? and, for the first time in her life, the Duchess felt that her actions would henceforth be subjected to the approval or disapproval of one to whom she had given a right to judge them—to one to whom she could only be bound by a guilty bond.

"Where have you been, lovely truant?" lisped Lord Henry Ellestree. "Your *gardes du corps* have separated, and gone in various directions in search of you. Had any one of them been absent, while you were unfound, he would have been sacrificed by the rest, on the suspicion of having the envied honour and happiness of being with you; but as all answered to the roll-call, no jealousy was excited."

Accustomed as she was to the familiar tone of *badinage* of her admirers, never previously had it sounded so disagreeably to her ears as at this moment. It appeared to her as nothing short of insult; and the thought of how Lord Glastonbury would have been shocked had he heard it, increased her disgust.

"I have been rather indisposed," observed the Duchess, assuming an air of unusual coldness and reserve, "and sought relief from the excessive heat of the ball-room, which affected me the moment I entered it, in the conservatory, the freshness of which revived me."

"How cruel not to have given notice to your body-guard, who claim the privilege of attending you!"

"I would not accept royalty on condition of such attendance," replied the Duchess, in a tone of undisguised *hauteur*.

"Ungrateful sovereign! most despotic of all rulers! queen of hearts! is this your thanks to the chosen band who wear your chains and dispute your smiles?"

"A truce to *badinage*, Lord Henry Ellestree, I pray you: I am, in good truth, tired of the folly of those who waste their time, and make themselves, and me too, ridiculous, by the exhibition of their attentions."

"You are surely jesting, fair Duchess; you cannot be serious? To behold your Grace—unattended by your faithful *garde du corps*,

would be as strange, as to imagine Venus, your prototype, unaccompanied by the Graces."

At this moment Lord Glastonbury approached, and took his usual station, at a little distance from her who occupied all his thoughts. She felt grateful for his consideration, in not coming to speak to her, though she longed for him to do so; and was obliged to exert all her self-control not to fix her eyes on him. He looked even more pale and serious than formerly, but there was an expression of deep tenderness in his glance when it met hers, that touched her to the heart. And now, those who had gone in search of the Duchess, through the suite of rooms, returned, and flocked around her, as had been their wont; each and all uttering the most flattering speeches, on the anxiety they had endured through her absence, and the satisfaction experienced at finding her. But no longer were their adulations acceptable to her who had hitherto received them with pleasure. They had become perfectly irksome to her, and struck her now, for the first time, as approaching to impertinence. What would

Lord Glastonbury think of this open and public homage to her? Might he not deem it a great liberty taken, and attribute levity to her for permitting it? She would not for worlds that *he* should think ill of her. Better were it that she should at once dismiss the flattering coxcombs around her, than inflict a single moment's pain on him, even though such a step might draw on her the enmity of the vain and giddy train who had elected her as the object of their adulation.

CHAPTER VIII.

ACTUATED by these thoughts, the Duchess assumed a stateliness of demeanour, and a cold reserve in her manner, as new as they were unacceptable to her admirers, who looked at each other askance, to inquire the cause of this sudden and unaccountable change. Their troublesome assiduities were not, however, so easily to be got rid of, and as the Duchess turned with distaste from them, she wondered how she ever could have tolerated such folly. She forgot how often it had amused and flattered her, to see this train of young men of fashion haunting her steps, and disputing her smiles, while other beauties were left neglected, or occupied only the attention of one admirer. Lord Glastonbury, profoundly skilled in the female heart, many a one of which he had probed, dissected,

and analysed, marked with inward satisfaction the alteration so visible in the behaviour of the object of his guilty love. Her youth, her exquisite beauty, her deep sensibility, and the artlessness with which it had been revealed, made an impression on him that surprised a heart grown callous from the number of attachments to which it had surrendered itself, and the brevity of their duration; but this new flame bid fair to burn longer and more warmly than any of the former ones, as its object was far more worthy of exciting a lasting passion. What a triumph would it be to his vanity to see the train of adorers, composed of the most distinguished young scions of nobility, who offered their homage to the lovely Duchess, slighted and dismissed for him! Yes,—the vain and heartless man, even in the commencement of an attachment, which would involve the peace and honour of a being, who, though giddy and fond of admiration, had never yet been pointed at by the finger of scandal,—nay, whose youth, inexperience, and position, had conciliated the indulgence of society, and

prevented its attributing evil to her somewhat open coquetry, could pause to think of the gratification of his vanity without one reflection on the certain consequences of it to her!

Oppressed by the new and tumultuous feelings that agitated her breast, the Duchess sate silent and *distraite*. She declined the repeated solicitations of her attending admirers to dance, though known to be passionately fond of that exercise, and, fatigued and languid, she arose to depart long before the conclusion of the ball. She directed a look of adieu to Lord Glastonbury, so full of tenderness, that, as if unable any longer to control his feelings, he moved hastily from the spot he had occupied, and, advancing rapidly to her side,—brushing past, as he did so, some of those who stood ready to dispute which among them should have the envied honour of leading her to her carriage,—he offered her his arm, which she accepted, and they left the room.

The surprise of the rest of her admirers could only be equalled by their anger. They looked at each other aghast. "Strange!" "ex-

traordinary!" "incomprehensible!" "*incroyable!*" broke from the lips of each, as their eyes followed the retreating steps of the lovely Duchess; and feelings of wounded vanity, malice, hatred, and all uncharitableness, filled their minds towards the detested rival, who had stepped in between them and their idol,—who saw in this imprudent step, on the part of her lover, but a new proof of the extent and excess of his ungovernable passion for her.

"Pardon me, loveliest, dearest," whispered he, "for thus breaking through the restrictions imposed by my desire to preserve, from even a suspicion, a fame dearer to me, oh! how infinitely dearer than my own, nay, than life itself; but I could not resist the uncontrollable impulse. I could not see you depart, without uttering a few words of farewell. It was torture to me to behold the senseless herd, who flutter round you, enjoy privileges which I would die to possess; or to see this beauteous arm, the very touch of which thrills through my frame, confided to one of them. Say you forgive me; and, above all, tell me at what

hour I may present myself at your door to-morrow."

The poor, inexperienced, and misguided young creature, to whom these words were addressed, was far from thinking that Lord Glastonbury's conduct was the result of premeditation, originating in a vanity that led him thus openly to display his influence over her, however detrimental the exhibition must prove to her reputation; and she went home, her heart filled by a guilty passion, and her mind in a tumult of delight, at the certainty that her feelings were reciprocated by the object of her unhallowed affection.

We will not attempt to paint the gradual progress by which Lord Glastonbury led his victim from the platonic and romantic attachment to which, at the commencement, he vowed his views were bounded, to the guilty one at which it arrived.

"Skilled in each subtle, wily art,
To taint with sin the mind and heart,
Till virtue, chased by sophistry,
And reason, blind, no more can see
The gulph, which passed, the erring fair,
From transient bliss, wakes to—despair."

The conquest, although achieved, had not been as easily won as Lord Glastonbury had anticipated. Virtue still lingered in the breast of the Duchess, long after passion had gained entrance there; and a less practised and artful seducer might have been foiled in the attempts to pervert one, naturally prone to good, had she fallen into other hands. Steep and slippery is the descent from virtue to sin, when a guilty passion is permitted to plead its cause, to a heart which, "though it loves the offender, yet detests the offence;" and so the Duchess found. Tired of a resistance, as disagreeable as it was unexpected, yet which, nevertheless, excited in Lord Glastonbury a still greater desire to subdue it, he at length declared his intention of leaving England, of becoming an exile, in the hope that, in a foreign land, he might regain the peace denied him in his own, where the sight of the object of his idolatry kept alive the passion that was consuming him. The Duchess, doubtful of her own strength to resist his pleadings, admitted, although it cost her many a pang, that, by a separation only could

she preserve her own esteem, and the world's respect.

All was arranged for the departure of Lord Glastonbury, when, in a luckless hour, she consented to receive his farewell. That interview, which was to have been their last for years to come, perhaps, for ever, saw her fall from virtue; and her seducer, now master of her destiny, abandoned his project of exile,—if, indeed, he ever seriously entertained it,—and remained to enjoy the triumph he had achieved.

For some months the passion of Lord Glastonbury continued unabated; and the devoted attention and respect with which it was evinced, consoled, in some measure, the object of it, who, no longer entitled to her own esteem, watched jealously for that of him for whom she had sacrificed it. Many and bitter were the pangs inflicted on her by conscience, even before she had any cause to suspect the truth of her lover; and often was her pillow steeped in tears wrung from her by the consciousness, that, however *he* might love, he *could not* respect her;

and the belief, that the demonstrations of this sentiment, which marked his manner towards her, were only assumed to soothe her now morbid sensitiveness. There were moments, it is true, when, in gilded *salons*, in a blaze of light, and sparkling in diamonds, with the dulcet sounds of music floating around her, and the more dulcet flatteries of her lover filling her ear, that she forgot the remorse which, in hours of solitude and reflection, was preying on her heart, and abandoned herself to the pleasure that courted her. But brief was the cessation from wretchedness. Returned to her home, that home which she felt she had dishonoured, conscious that her very servants more than suspected her lapse from virtue, she would sink, pale and exhausted, into a chair, while her *femme de chambre* removed from her person the costly diamonds that had excited admiration and envy among many of her sex that night, and would seek her couch, to which sleep had now become a rare guest. Her countenance soon bore evidence of the anxiety of her mind; her beautiful form lost its rounded symmetry, and her

eyes their lustre. Her lover was not slow to observe the change in her appearance; but it awakened no tenderness in his cold and callous breast. He marked the effect, but he searched not the cause of the wretchedness endured by his victim. He surprised her often in tears, which were, however, quickly chased away by his presence; for love still held the bandage over her eyes, that concealed the worthlessness of him for whom she had sacrificed so much, and rendered his visits a source of happiness to her. When, however, she attempted to reveal the state of her feelings to her lover, and tried to paint the remorse and inquietude that tortured her, he would accuse her of weakness, and reproach, rather than soothe her, until she at length found that she had no sympathy to expect from him; that she was regarded but as the plaything of his lighter hours, the object who was to minister to his pleasure, but with whose cares and sorrows he could take no part. These cares and sorrows began now to show their inevitable effect on the health of the Duchess; and her heartless lover, whose vanity had been

so highly gratified by the admiration her beauty excited, that his passion for her had been kept alive by seeing her the acknowledged idol of the circles in which they moved, now saw other women usurp her place, while she, wholly engrossed by her attachment to him, and the remorse it occasioned, made no effort to maintain the supremacy in society that constituted her firmest hold on his affections. Her tears and melancholy excited only his anger or *ennui;* her indifferenee to general admiration, he considered as a mark of little less than folly, and the *tête-à-têtes,* hitherto sought with pleasure, if not with the ardour that originally marked them, began, to use his own phrase, to be a bore to him. Habit, and a sense of delicacy to the feelings of the Duchess, alone induced a continuation of Lord Glastonbury's daily visits, long after they had ceased to be at all necessary to his happiness; nay more, long after they had become irksome to him.

The Duchess marked his growing indifference, and the anguish it inflicted sharpened the pangs of remorse, which, even in the hey-

day of love, and while yet the object of it seemed to live but in her presence, made themselves so acutely felt. Keenly did she experience the truth of the axiom, which asserts, that unhallowed attachments, being founded on no stable basis, and unsupported by any of the props, such as mutual esteem, perfect confidence, and the world's respect, which serve to maintain conjugal affection when the first impetus of passion has softened down into a less warm, but more enduring sentiment, can have but a brief existence. And was it to be thus neglected, thus left to her own sad and reproachful thoughts, that she had violated the laws of virtue, and sacrificed for ever her own self-respect, and title to that of others? Wounded love, offended pride, and womanly delicacy prompted her to break at once, and for ever, with him who had won her heart but to torture it; yet she had not sufficient resolution to carry this suggestion of her reason into effect, and she still wore the chain that bound her to her seducer, although its iron had entered into her heart, and was daily, hourly,

preying on her life. Often did the beautiful lines of Goldsmith recur to her memory—

"When lovely woman stoops to folly,
And finds too late that men betray,
What charm can soothe her melancholy,
What art can wash her guilt away?

"The only art, her guilt to cover,
And hide her shame from every eye,
To give repentance to her lover,
And wring his bosom, is—to die."

"Perhaps *he* would regret me, and mourn that he had been neglectful, unkind," would the Duchess say to herself, when in the solitude of her chamber she was left to brood over, almost to a moody madness, her own remorse, and her lover's altered conduct. "Oh! were I but sure that he would give a tear to my fate,—that I should be remembered with tenderness; yes, I would invoke death, all unfit as I am to meet it!" would she exclaim; "nay, I would anticipate the tardy approach of the pale king of terrors, and, by a draught of Lethean power, seek in the grave the peace I can never more know on earth."

Such were the fearful thoughts that filled the mind of this poor spoiled child of fortune; this

idol of fashion, who was looked upon by hundreds of the giddy throng among whom she moved, as an object of envy, to fill whose place they would have thought no sacrifice too great.

By how many trifling incidents may a sensitive heart be wounded, and an estranged affection be revealed! The *bouquets*, which Lord Glastonbury had, during the first months of his passion, been wont to present to the Duchess every day when he paid his visit, had been composed of flowers the odours of which she preferred above all others; and with them a bunch of violets was always placed, as a symbol of the donor's desire that his passion should be veiled from the eyes of the world, as that flower seeks to hide itself from the vulgar gaze. These *bouquets*, of late, were so far less choice than formerly, as to bear evidence, that the selection had been confided to some one ignorant of the allegory, for no more violets were sent, and the flowers she peculiarly liked were not only left out, but sometimes days elapsed in which no *bouquet* appeared, and Lord Glastonbury came not.

It was at this period that the faithless lover became captivated by a new object, who effaced from his fickle heart the image of one who had "loved him, not wisely, but too well." So engrossed was he by his new flame, that he scarcely bestowed a thought on his prior one, who, tortured by the pangs of jealousy and self-reproach, admitted that her punishment for forsaking the paths of virtue, though severe, was well merited, and, coming through him who had lured her to sin, rendered it still more bitter. At one moment she determined to vent, when next they met, the reproaches which his inconstancy and ingratitude furnished but too much cause for. Yes, she would tear him from her heart, even though, in doing so, the fibres of that agonized heart should be rent asunder. She would tell him to come no more, with false vows and deceitful smiles, to cheat her; but then returning love would master jealousy and anger, and tears, burning tears, would deluge those eyes lately so lustrous; and all the woman, the fond, betrayed woman, would resume its empire over sterner feelings.

CHAPTER IX.

And now was revealed to Selina the cause of the inequality of her unhappy mistress's spirits, and the frequent traces of tears on her pallid face.

"Can you vondere, Mademoiselle, dat I live in terror of some terrible catastrophy?" demanded Madame Fanchon. "I never can believe dat *ce cher ange* is guilty of more dan a *grande passion* for Milor Glastonbury. I could not bear to tink ill of her whom I have held in dese old videred arms ven she vos a baby, and who I love better dan my life. *O mon Dieu, mon Dieu!* to tink dat her moder, who is in heaven, could have von daughter less pure dan herself, von child not vordy to go to her in heaven. No, Mademoiselle, I could not, I dare not tink such a terrible ting possible. But yet, I do know dat she loves, madly loves dis Milor. I have heard her, ven she vas ill,

and I vatched by her bedside, call him by such fond names, and sigh so deep, as if her poor heart vould break; and I have trembled vid fear dat de *femme de chambre* who vas here before you came, and was so very *curieuse*, vould hear vat she said, and tell it to oders. Ah! Mademoiselle, de Duke very bad man. He not advise de *pauvre cher ange*. He not prevent dat *dangereux* Milor to come so often, vich he ought to do. Who can tell how strange is de human heart? Ven dis Milor Glastonbury used to come here every day, and stay hours vid de Duchesse, I did often vish he vould not come, and pray dat he might stay avay. But of late, ven I see dat he not come often, and dat she is more sad dan ever, dat she looks paler dan before, and dat I see de marks de tears leave on her poor dear face; ah! den I vish he vould come, and blame him, and hate him more dan before for making her unhappy. I fear every ting. I find de blood run up to my very forehead ven de servants do mention Milor Glastonbury's name; and if von of dem smile, *O mon Dieu!* I feel I could beat dem. I do tink

de Duke knows dat de Duchesse love dis Milor, and he vill some day tell her he knows all, and vow he vill believe her guilty of all de sin, vich I, who love her, cannot believe, and he vill make her give him all her fortune not to be disgraced, not to be *exposé* to de vorld. And I know de Duchesse is so *fière*, dat ven he say he believes her guilty, it vill eider kill her, or she vill leave de house, never to see him no more."

Many were the tears shed by Madame Fanchon during this confidential disclosure to Selina, who, shocked at the communication, though filled with pity for her unhappy and erring mistress, felt wholly at a loss what step to take. To remain with one whom she could not help thinking highly culpable, if not wholly guilty, was so contrary to her principles, that she felt disposed to invent some pretext for resigning her place; and yet, to abandon her mistress, when she was evidently suffering such wretchedness, would be, she thought, unkind, ungrateful.

The next day a request from the Duke of Glenallen to see the Duchess, produced even

an increase of agitation and inquietude on the part of that lady; and it was so evident, that Selina experienced the deepest compassion, when she beheld her mistress, with trembling limbs, proceed to the *boudoir* to meet her husband.

The Duke of Glenallen had been long a silent, but not unobservant spectator of the change in his wife's character. He had marked when she had abandoned general admiration and homage, for a deeper and more concentrated sentiment; but he held out no hand to snatch her from the fearful gulph which yawned to destroy her peace, and his honour; he uttered no warning to deter her from ruin. What, to him, was the certainty of wretchedness that must await a woman like his wife, when, having strayed from virtue, and forfeited her own esteem, she should too late discover the unworthiness of him for whom she had sacrificed herself? That she never had loved, never could love *him*, he felt convinced. What, then, was it to him on whom she bestowed those affections that never could be his? All *he* required was,

that she should not outrage *les bienséances du monde*, by permitting her lover to *afficher*, and compromise her in society; while *he* would make her comprehend that *his* silence and forbearance should be repaid by the absolute disposal of her large income being confided to him. The horror and contempt, excited in the mind of the unhappy Duchess, when her unprincipled husband revealed to her his knowledge of her sin, and the conditions on which alone he would consent to conceal it, are not to be described. Shame, deep and burning shame, crimsoned her cheek, and made her hide her face with her hands, while tears gushed through her fingers, and fell in showers on her tortured breast, without affording even a moment's relief to her bitter agony.

"Spare me, spare me, the deep humiliation of this hour!" cried she, her utterance impeded by sobs. "Why, why did you make no effort to save me from the toils that ensnared my youth, —from myself. You might have entitled yourself to my respect, and have enabled me to preserve my own."

"Why this agitation?" said the Duke, "I did not mean to give you pain. Indeed I thought, young as you are, you could hardly believe that my eyes could be shut to that which was, through the unguarded and open display of your *tendresse* for Lord Glastonbury, made so manifest to all the world. A husband, though generally the last to be made acquainted with such matters, cannot be *wholly* blind, when decorum is violated, and his feelings overlooked. You have put it out of my power to plead ignorance of your conduct; but yet it rests with me, to *appear* as if I knew it not, and so enable you to retain your position in society. You now know the terms on which I will consent to this; and if you are wise you will not reject them." So saying, the Duke withdrew, leaving his wife a prey to shame and despair.

"What now remains to me?" demanded the Duchess, when left again to her own overwhelming reflections. "It was torture to meet the glance of my husband, while I believed him in ignorance of my guilt; but now,—now when he has declared his knowledge of it, how

can I ever see him more? Had he reproached, spurned me, better could I have borne it; but to have attempted to traffic with my sin, to make terms for the concealment of my shame, —oh, it is too, too dreadful! Where can I turn me for aid! An orphan, with no pitying mother's breast on which I could weep my sin, —no sister's heart to appeal to, to shield me from its fearful consequences,—no friend to lean on, what,—what is to become of me? Under this roof I cannot remain. I could not again submit to the degradation of hearing a price set on the concealment of my shame, and that, too, by *him* whose duty it was to protect my inexperienced youth from the dangers that beset my path, to save me from—myself. I was not hardened; I would have listened to his warning voice; I would have followed his counsel; but, with no pity for the poor wretch he had duped into a marriage so disproportioned, he allowed me to become an easy prey to the seducer, and to my own mad passion. O God! and have I lived to hear a husband propose terms like those he offered? Am I,

indeed, so lost, so disgraced, that he should propose them, and I not die of shame in listening? To have impunity thus offered for guilt, is worse, oh! how infinitely worse, and more degrading, than open exposure by a justly exasperated but honourable husband. Had mine been such, I would have deplored my sin with burning tears at his feet,—I would have entreated permission to hide my guilt in some secluded spot, where my penitence might, after long years, efface a portion, at least, of the stain; and, if his pity were denied me, I would, without a murmur, submit to the sentence that sent me forth from his roof an outcast. But to confront a husband, whose silence may be bought with gold! Oh! it would be agony, and infamy, too great to bear. Better would it be at once to incur the penalty of guilt, to brave the world's contumely, so hard, so terrible for a sensitive woman to encounter,—to fly with the partner of my sin, and hide myself for ever from those who now flatter and follow me, than to remain beneath this roof, and meet again the Duke. I will write

to Lord Glastonbury; I will propose to him to take me away from all this misery, this degradation. He is the only being on whom I have a claim, the claim of guilt incurred for his sake! There was a time when no day passed in which he used not to say, that his happiness would never be complete until I was all his own;—when *one* roof would shelter us, one destiny unite our fates. But, woe is me, that time has passed! My remorse, and its results on the beauty that won him, have cooled his affection. How often have I marked with agony the change but too apparent in him! and yet, knowing this, must I urge a claim on his pity, or his honour, for the protection his love would no longer prompt him to offer me! Whichever way I turn, disgrace and misery await me! O God! O God! have mercy on me."

The Duchess's note soon brought Lord Glastonbury to her presence. There was an incoherence in it that alarmed him, *not* for *her*, (for, selfish and unfeeling, he cared little for his victim;) but for himself it greatly frightened him.

"There must be something wrong," exclaimed he, "some discovery made by the Duke. I hardly know whether I ought to go to her. Such a step may compromise me in some way or other. She is so cursedly romantic, so filled with false notions, that she is capable of any folly. Yet, if I do not go, she may take it into her head to come here; yes, by Jove! and fix herself on me. That would be a terrible affair. Had she done so at first it would have been different; and I sometimes wished her to elope with me then, when my passion was in its zenith. I dreamed of a divorce to be obtained by the Duke, and of my marrying her; no very bad speculation, as she possesses so large a fortune in her own right, which would be very convenient in the embarrassed state of my affairs. But *now*, when satiety has taken the place of affection, when her remorse, as she calls her blue devils, has broken her spirits, and made her a Niobe, always in tears,—not thrice her fortune, large as it is, would tempt me to live with her. No, no, I am too well acquainted with the sufferings

of poor Chattingham, who married the divorced Lady Alicia Evelyn, who has, ever since, been a Magdalen, weeping away her sins, and drowning his comfort in her tears. The world is more indulgent to male sinners than to females. It opens its *salons* to the first with a charity highly to be approved, while it rigidly excludes the second; that is, it is severe on the weak, as it always is, and kind to the strong. The excluded, left alone to reflect, feels it hard to bear that her husband should enjoy advantages from which she is debarred. If he stays at home with her, he becomes bored to death by her sadness. If he goes into society, she feels herself ill-used. The consequence is, that, having deeply considered the question, I have too much reason to rejoice that the Duchess did not take advantage of my proposals to fly with me during the first passionate days of love, ever to incur the chance of incurring such a heavy penalty again. But, I must go to her. Ye Gods! how bored I shall be. Already do I feel an inclination to yawn in anticipation of the interview. I see her face spoiled by tears,

as usual; hear her voice tremulous, and broken by sobs, and—but no, I must not dwell on the scene I have to encounter, or I shall lose courage to go."

"What has happened?" were nearly the first words that passed the lips of Lord Glastonbury, as he entered the *boudoir* of the Duchess of Glenallen, whom he found more pale and agitated than ever, and whose hand trembled violently in his when he took it.

"The Duke has discovered all. Oh! I am a lost, a degraded woman," was the reply.

"The devil he has! I always feared it would be so. You are so imprudent, so *exigeante*. You would make me come here much more frequently than was prudent, would insist on my never leaving you in public, and would not, in spite of all my advice, burn my letters. You may blame yourself for all the *esclandre* that will take place. The fault certainly was not mine."

"These reproaches are now as ill-timed as they are unkind," replied the Duchess, her face becoming suffused with a deep red, and then turning pale as marble. "As well may

you reproach me for having loved you too well."

"My dear friend, this is not a time for sentimentality," said Lord Glastonbury impatiently. "What do you intend to do? for that is now the question."

"Can you ask? Oh, what remains for me to do but to seek refuge with the only being who has not a right to reproach me, or to deny me protection?" and floods of tears coursed each other down the pale cheeks of the Duchess.

"You must be mad to think of such a step; and I should be worse than mad not at once to tell you that it is impossible, and must not be thought of," replied Lord Glastonbury, with a vehemence that proved how firm was his resolution not to consent to the measure suggested by the agonized woman before him, who, terrified and shocked by his unusual sternness and violence of manner, sank into a chair, and covered her face with her hands. "You can go abroad until this *esclandre* is forgotten," resumed Lord Glastonbury; "you have, luckily for you, a large fortune, and that is a salve

which heals the wounds inflicted on reputation so well, that after some years only slight scars remain. You can, after some time, come back and——"

"And you," interrupted the Duchess, her tears dried by the burning heat of her cheeks, "what do you mean to do? Am I to go forth alone to face a world whose contumely I have incurred by loving you to my own destruction?"

"Would you have me plunge you still deeper in a scrape?" demanded Lord Glastonbury. The Duchess shuddered at the mean and inappropriate word substituted for ruin. "Were you in a cooler mood to listen, I could give you a thousand incontrovertible reasons, many imperative with regard to myself, and most kindly meant with regard to you, why I must positively, now, and for ever, decline being the companion of your flight. If, as I suppose, you will be immediately driven from this house, let me advise you to go abroad. I will write to you often, and keep you *au fait* of all that is going on. Nay more, I will make an

excursion to the continent during the recess from business, and spend a few days wherever you take up your abode."

While Lord Glastonbury was uttering this unfeeling speech, every word of which pierced the heart of the unfortunate woman to whom it was addressed, as if a dagger had stabbed her, she became sensible, for the first time, of the utter worthlessness of the man for whom she had sacrificed her honour, her peace, and the world's respect. To find,—and in her hour of need,—that he loved her not,—that he could contemplate their separation unmoved,—behold, nay counsel her exile from her native land, from that society whose idol she had been, until the consequences of her love for him had thrown her from the pedestal where she was wont to be worshipped,—to hear him designate the ruin of her reputation, of her peace, as a "scrape," was too much.

"Leave me!" said the tortured woman. "I will trouble you no more."

"Come, come, this is foolish. Do not think, that, because I will not compromise you and

myself still more, by agreeing to your unwise, and, I really must say, absurd and preposterous plan of our living together, I am unmindful of your interest and happiness. I best prove my sincerity by firmly resisting your wishes on this occasion. You are unhappy at this moment,—it is very natural that you should be so; but I, who am older, a great deal older, and have more experience than you, my dear friend, know that all this sorrow will pass away. Every strong passion does; their very intensity exhausts them. I remember when circumstances compelled me to break off with my first love, I thought I should never more know happiness, and for the first few weeks I *was* miserable. But, after a time, I became reasonable; people always do, and so you will, my sweet friend."

How often had Lord Glastonbury declared to the Duchess, that he never had *really* oved before he knew her! how frequently sworn, that no other woman had ever inflicted, or ever could inflict a pang on his heart! The belief in the truth of these assertions had been

one of the strongest motives for her affection; and often had it been laid to her heart. To hear him now refer coolly to other loves,—offer his own experience, to prove how easily the wounds of affection are healed and forgotten, was agony, was torture to the unhappy woman. She trembled so violently, and looked so death-like, that even her false lover began to apprehend that *hers* was not a sorrow that could lightly pass away,—nay, some fears for her reason and her life flashed on him, as he looked on her agonized face. He would have taken her hand, but she waved him from her. "Leave me, I entreat you!" said she; "I wish to be alone. I shall soon be better; but at present I must be alone."

"As you wish," was the reply; for, piqued by her command to withdraw, the pity that was awaking in his selfish heart became quickly chilled. "You can write me a line, if I can be of use," added he; and the door closed after him.

CHAPTER X.

It was long ere the Duchess of Glenallen moved from the spot, where she had sunk into a chair. When Lord Glastonbury left the room, Madame Fanchon, having heard of his visit, went to Selina, and, with every symptom of alarm in her countenance, inquired where the Duchess was. "I know dat Milor Glastonbury is gone some time. De groom of de chambres told me so; and I expected to find de Duchesse here. Venever dat man come here of late she is always so sad after, dat I vant to be near her, doe she not vish it. I have a dread of someting, I know not vat. I will go to de *boudoir;* and you, Mademoiselle, come vid me, and stay at de door, and if I call, you come in directly."

Selina accompanied Madame Fanchon to the

door of the *boudoir,* as she was told; but no sooner had the latter entered it, than she uttered a cry, and Selina rushed into the room. They found the Duchess perfectly insensible, in which state she had probably been for some time; and, for a few minutes, they believed her dead. Madame Fanchon uttered piercing shrieks, and, in her terror and grief, lost all power of being useful, while Selina rang the bell, sent instantly for the family physician, bathed the temples of her mistress with cold water, and used every other effort in her power to restore suspended animation. At length the Duchess revived. Her heart beat feebly beneath the hand of Selina; she sighed deeply, and opened her eyes. The joy of Madame Fanchon now became as wild and unmanageable as her terror and grief had previously been; and Selina had great difficulty in making her comprehend, that positive quiet was absolutely necessary to the Duchess. "*Cher ange! cher ange!*" exclaimed the poor old woman, dropping on her knees, and pressing the hand of her mistress to her lips, and bathing it with her tears.

Though animation was restored, and a faint pink hue replaced the pallid one that had overspread the face of the Duchess, consciousness was not yet quite restored. She gazed around her, looked at Madame Fanchon and Selina inquiringly, then raised her hand to her brow, as if to collect her thoughts, and, after a short pause, uttered a piercing cry; and again fainted.

The doctor soon after arrived, administered restoratives, and had her removed to her chamber, giving the strictest injunctions that his patient should not, for a moment, be left alone. He made various inquiries, as to the state of the Duchess previous to this sudden attack,—inquiries that proved to Selina that *he*, like herself, was disposed to attribute it to some strong moral suffering, rather than to any physical cause. He remained with the Duchess until he saw her sink into a state of drowsiness, and was on the point of withdrawing, when the Duke of Glenallen entered the chamber.

"My God! doctor, what is all this?" said he, evidently in great alarm. "I but this moment

entered from my drive, and heard that the Duchess had been taken suddenly ill."

"I really feel at a loss," replied the physician; "not with regard to the peculiar character of her Grace's malady, but to the origin. I should attribute it to some sudden moral shock, some deep grief—but that I hear nothing has occurred to occasion any such emotions."

The Duke turned pale, opened the curtain of the bed, gazed intently on the pallid, but still lovely, face of his wife, then, dropping the curtain gently, an expression of the greatest alarm overspreading his countenance, he whispered the doctor, who, in return, shook his head, and uttered a few words *sotto voce;* and then both retired to the next room, to continue the conversation.

"Ah! Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle, how fortunate it was dat my heart did visper me to go to de *boudoir*. *Mon Dieu! mon Dieu! sans cela*, she might be now gone from us for ever. She has de heart *trop chaud, trop fier;* and dat vill kill her von day. *Cher ange!* she vas not used to chagrin, only for a short time, vid dat

méchante Madame Vestern. Ah! dat voman vas de cause of all dis misery. If she not have tormented *cette chère créature* more dan nobody could bear, she never run avay to marry de *rusé* old Duke; and I vould not, like von stupid *vieux gobemouche,* have helped him to do it all. But, *Dieu sait!* I did believe it vas for de best, or I never lend myself in de affair; but oh! I now tink it vas all for de vorst."

Selina took her station by the bedside, determined not to leave it; and great difficulty had she to prevent the garrulous old Frenchwoman from talking, for, though passionately attached and devoted to the Duchess, Madame Fanchon was so given to talk, that she could hardly remain silent a minute. The Duke stole into the chamber every hour to see how his wife was; and so great was the anxiety pictured on his face, that Selina, although greatly prejudiced against him by the previous communications of Madame Fanchon, could not help pitying him. The old woman noticed this; and when he had withdrawn, after the fifth or sixth visit, shook her head, and whispered, "Ah,

Mademoiselle, you are, like me, a *gobemouche*. You tink all dese visits are because he loves her. No, no; it is because he loves her fortune, and is afraid to lose it. *Mon Dieu!* ven von tink dat *cette belle créature* is not loved for *herself*, she dat has all to make her loved, it drive me mad. No, he tinks only of de money; and if he could keep dat, after her death, he vould be more glad dan sorry she should die. Oh! *c'est un vieux sans cœur, un égoïste.* You may believe me. Yet vonce he did so deceive me, dat I tought him de most kind, de most excellent of men, who only vished to marry Miladi Louise to take her from de power of dat odious Madame Vestern; and I did honour and esteem him for it. But ven I found out de truth, oh, *mon Dieu!* how I did hate and despise myself for having been such a *bête* as to tink vell of him!"

And now the torpid state in which the unhappy Duchess had been for several hours plunged, changed into one of feverish excitement. She still slept, but her cheeks became flushed, and her hand burned. She spoke

frequently, and the events that had occasioned the malady which now had seized her occupied her mind even in the delirium that reigned over it. She raved of the dishonourable proposal of her husband,—of the heartless ingratitude of her lover. She called on death to release her from an existence now become insupportable, and on the Almighty for pardon for her sin. It was piteous to hear her incoherent ravings, and mark the change in her late pale face. One moment she would, believing him present, address Lord Glastonbury by the most endearing epithets—deplore that they had met too late to be joined in holy wedlock before God and man;—ask him if he could still love her when shame had set its stigma on her brow, and all who once esteemed her turned away in horror and contempt from her approach? The next, she would recal their last interview, utter the most cutting reproaches, and accuse him of having destroyed her here and hereafter.

The Duke entered more than once during the time she was uttering these frantic ravings

of delirium; and his cheek, albeit unused to flush, grew red as he listened to them.

"She is evidently under the influence of a brain fever, and knows not what she utters," observed he; "I must again send for the doctor."

"Ah! you know too vell dat she speak de terrible truth," said Madame Fanchon, when he left the chamber, "and you vill have to ansver before de throne of de Almighty for de misery you have brought on dis poor *orpheline*."

The doctor now declared that the Duchess was, as her husband had stated, suffering from a brain fever, and he called in three other medical men of eminence in their profession, to assist him with their opinions. For many days it was their belief that their patient must sink under the violence of her disease; and there were hours in which so total was the prostration of her strength, that Selina thought her life could not last through the day. She watched over her with a tenderness not to be described, bathed her burning temples with iced water, and applied cooling draughts to her fevered lips.

Affection and intelligence enabled her to perform the functions of a nurse in a manner that surprised, while it delighted all present; and the doctors declared that they had never previously met with so able and judicious an assistant as in her. The Duke, whose anxiety won him the esteem of the physicians, repeatedly thanked Selina for her unceasing care of the Duchess; and the attached Madame Fanchon admitted that her skill as a nurse was far excelled by that of Selina.

"I not tink," would she say, "dat any Engelishe woman have such a power of endurance. She never tires, never vants to sleep, never complains, but dere she sits vid her eyes fixed on *ce cher ange*, and so still dat she never is heard to breathe, and if any ting is vanted, she glides about de room like a spirit vidout being heard to move. I do believe it is all because she speak so *leetle*. If she has any toughts, dey are all shut up in her heart, for she never lets dem out, and so she is not like me, *fatiguée* from talking. It is de vay vid de Engelishe. Dey have not, like de French,

fresh toughts coming into deir minds every minute, vich forces dem to speak de old toughts to give room for de new. No, dey have not de *esprit* like de French; if dey had, dey would be obliged to talk, talk, as I do, and dat would *fatiguer* dem."

Such was the way in which the *amour propre* of Madame Fanchon accounted for the devoted and never-tiring zeal of Selina in the sick room, and in which she satisfactorily, to herself at least, explained her own incapability to fulfil the office of nurse as Selina did.

Those only who have watched by the couch of one dear to them, during a malady that threatens, every moment, to snatch to the grave the object of their care, can be aware how, under such trying circumstances, affection and interest become tenfold increased,—and how the life of the anxious watcher seems to hang on that of the poor helpless creature struggling between life and death before her.

"How providential, O Almighty God," would Selina say to herself in the stillness of night, "are thy decrees! Thou who hast, by

filling my heart with tenderness for this Thy suffering and erring creature, rendered that a labour of love, which Thy mercy has enabled me to support, but which, with less affection for her, I might have lacked zeal, ability, or strength to fulfil. Grant, O merciful God, that she may be spared to mourn and atone for her sin, and so live for the future to Thy honour and her own salvation."

At length a favourable change took place in the health of the Duchess, but not until she was reduced almost to a shadow, and so weak as to be helpless as an infant. Slow was her approach to convalescence, but it was marked by a patience and gentleness that indicated a great change in her character. No longer did she pray for the death which she now felt she was unfit to meet. She evinced gratitude to all who had contributed towards rescuing her from danger, but, most of all, to Him who had vouchsafed to open her eyes to her own errors and to lead her to seek to atone for them. Towards Selina she showed a sentiment of affection, which proved that, even while supposed

to be unconscious of all that was passing around her, she was sensible of her tender and watchful care.

When able to leave her sick chamber, the Duchess declared her intention of retiring for some months to a seat of hers in a distant county. Her physicians approved the scheme, and persons were despatched to render the mansion fit for her reception. Before she left town, she had a long and touching conversation with the Duke, in which she censured her own past conduct so severely, and dealt so mercifully with his, that even his selfish nature was melted, and he asked her forgiveness for having ever wounded her feelings, and promised never again to occasion her a moment's pain. They parted amicably, the Duchess appropriating a considerable portion of her large income to his use, and determined henceforth to make a better use of the wealth bestowed by providence on her, than she had ever hitherto done.

No longer treated as a domestic, but as a friend, Selina now became the constant and useful companion of the Duchess. She read to

her, and drew her attention to works calculated to strengthen her mind, instead of exciting her imagination. "The Book of Books, The Holy Bible," was every day opened, and in its sacred pages the wounded heart and tortured conscience of the Duchess found a balm. She soon learned to be thankful for the events that had, while nearly depriving her of life, awakened her to a deep sense of her own unworthiness, and of gratitude to God for his mercy. She frequently wrote to her husband, to exhort him to turn his thoughts from this sinful world, on the pleasures of which he had allowed them too long to be engrossed, and to prepare for that better life, to which by repentance he might still aspire. The answers of the Duke, though polite, and even affectionate, held out little hope to his wife that her appeals to his conscience had the desired effect. Nevertheless, a sense of duty led her to continue to exhort him, and, when informed some months after, that he was seized with a dangerous illness, she instantly left her tranquil abode, and returned to his habitation to administer to his comfort.

She watched over him, as a duteous daughter would have done to a father. She prayed for him, and even won him to join with her in prayer. His death-bed, if not all that could be desired by one whose whole thoughts were now turned to another world, was not such as could deprive her of the soothing hope that he had benefited by her counsel, and profited by her prayers. He died, thanking her for her care, after having at her request several times seen a worthy clergyman, and manifested an earnest attention to the spiritual comfort he administered, when all other views faded away.

There had been a time when the Duchess would have rejoiced in her release from the chain that had bound her to a husband so every way unsuited to her; but that time was passed. Ever since the illness which had brought her to the verge of the grave, she had learned to view her own conduct with such sorrow and repentance, that she had become indulgent for his, and grateful that he had not exposed her error and sin to the world. In vain did Madame Fanchon, with less charity, endeavour to per-

suade the Duchess that the Duke's forbearance originated in a less worthy motive than that which she attributed to it. The elevated mind of her mistress not being prone to detect vice, to which it was a stranger, she remembered only the good derived from her husband's silence, and was not disposed to be ungrateful for it. The truth was, the danger in which her life had been placed had so alarmed the Duke, that believing her illness to have been occasioned by the communication he had ventured on in the interview that had preceded it, and which had so strongly excited her, he not only regretted the dishonourable conduct of which he had been guilty, but determined henceforth never to refer to it.

Her deep emotion on that occasion had revealed to him how much of what was noble and good still filled her heart. He remembered how blamable his own conduct towards her had been; how he had left her, when little more than a child, exposed to the dangers that must ever await a young and beautiful woman, with no husband to protect, no friend to counsel her;

and his better nature, so long shut in by the thick envelope of selfishness that encased it, was awakened to a deep sense of pity for her, and blame to himself. Her generosity towards him previously to her retiring to the country, achieved her triumph over his newly-awakened sense of right; and had his life been prolonged, the Duchess would have found in him a true friend, anxious for her happiness, though incapable of forming it. The Duchess returned to her seclusion, and recommenced the life of study, broken in upon only by works of good, that had filled up her time before she went to London to attend her dying husband. She established schools, built an hospital, and large alms-houses, to be supported solely at her expense. She visited and relieved the poor, comforted the unhappy, encouraged the deserving, and sought to reclaim the erring.

Before three months of her widowhood had expired, a letter from Lord Glastonbury reached her. He had left England the day after their last interview, fearful that some *esclandre* which might compromise his personal interests would

take place. He looked on the Duchess as little less than insane, and capable of not only destroying her own position for ever, but of compromising his. To escape any future scenes, as he termed it, or any *exposé*, he went off to the continent, where pleasure had detained him until he read in the newspaper the death of the Duke of Glenallen. This event produced serious reflections in his worldly and unfeeling mind. The Duchess, now free to dispose of her hand and vast fortune, had become a very different person to the wife whose husband might any day have exposed her, and compromised her lover. Her sin had not been revealed to the world. She had not lost caste, so he could by wedding her secure to himself the wealthiest heiress in England; a woman, too, so beautiful as to preclude the possibility of the man on whom she bestowed her hand being accused of mercenary motives; and standing in so high a position in society as to reflect, rather than receive distinction, on whomsoever she might marry.

"And of this *bonne fortune* I am sure," said

Lord Glastonbury to himself; "I am the only man she ever loved, ever committed herself with. She will be but too happy to redeem the only sin of her life by a marriage with the partner of it. I can persuade her that I left England wholly to save her reputation; that my sternness at our last interview was only assumed to prevent her ruin; and that never did I love her so fondly, nor give her such an undeniable proof of my attachment, as when I declined to accept the sacrifice she was anxious to make, of flying with me. Women are so credulous, so prone to believe every assertion made by a man they love, that I feel certain she will receive all my explanations with perfect confidence, and I shall bear off a prize, of which every marrying man in England will envy me the possession. I am on the whole a devilish lucky dog, and now rejoice that Lady Julia Mordaunt did not accept my offer at Paris. Her fortune is not above one quarter the amount of the Duchess's, her person not to be compared, and she is ten years older. Yes, I am a lucky fellow!"

It was after indulging a train of reflections like

the above quoted, that Lord Glastonbury wrote a proposal of marriage to the Duchess of Glenallen. The letter was an artful one. It referred, but with the tact of an experienced man of the world, to their former attachment, and his desire that the only error of an otherwise spotless life should be effaced by a marriage that would redeem and sanctify it. He painted his unchanged passion in glowing colours, and his impatience to throw himself at the feet of the object of it, from which he was only deterred by the dread of compromising, in the slightest degree, her whom he hoped, when the required time for widowhood had passed away, he should lead to the hymeneal altar.

Never had the Duchess felt so indignant as after the perusal of this letter. The blood mounted to her very temples, and her lips trembled.

"And this is the man for whom I sinned! for whom I have for ever lost my own respect," exclaimed she; "oh! it needed not this fresh exposure of his unworthiness to humble me in my own eyes, to renew that repentance for my

guilt which no time can efface. Wed him! No, not for worlds! not to buy even the concealment of my sin. Deeply as I deplore, and must ever lament it, and desirous as I am to bury it in oblivion from the world, rather would I brave the worst,—his revelation of it, and the scorn of society, than become his wife."

Her answer to his letter astonished almost as much as it enraged him. Incapable of comprehending or of appreciating a character like hers, he instantly came to the conclusion that some new attachment on her part could alone have led to her rejection of him. Under this impression he wrote to her again, insinuating, rather than openly menacing, that if she ever consented to wed another, he would reveal her former *liaison* with him.

"How little does he know me," said the Duchess to herself, "if he believes me capable of deceiving any man who might address me as a suitor! No, never again will I marry!"

CHAPTER XI.

It was some time before the Duchess recovered her ordinary state of composure, so cruelly broken in upon by the heartless and indelicate letters of Lord Glastonbury. These new proofs of the baseness of the man she had once so sinfully loved, overwhelmed her with shame, and increased her contrition; a contrition so deep and sincere, that she deemed a long life of repentance would not be sufficient to redeem her sin. Every hour of her life was passed in doing good, or in reading and reflection; and when Selina looked on this beautiful woman, not yet more than two-and-twenty years old, possessed of boundless wealth, descended from one of the noblest houses, holding such an elevated rank, and sought after by the highest and proudest, thus devoting her youth to the amelioration of the condition of the poor,

and to penitence for one sin, a sin unknown to the world, she could almost have wept that one so naturally prone to good, should have been, by the force of circumstances, hurried into a crime, the sense of which deprived her of that happiness, which her personal and mental attractions, no less than her position, might have secured her.

The seclusion in which the Duchess of Glenallen lived did not preclude her from the addresses of many of her former admirers. It is true, they did not, like Lord Glastonbury, presume to write to her until a year had elapsed after the death of the Duke. Many of these suitors were in every way unexceptionable; and all had enjoyed opportunities of knowing and appreciating her whose hand they were anxious to gain. The Duchess never hesitated a moment in declining their proposals, persisting in her resolution never again to marry. Many were the visits offered by former female friends, with sons, brothers, or nephews, for whom they longed to win the prize; but delicate health was pleaded as an excuse for refusing all visits, and

at length the beautiful recluse, as it now became the fashion to call her, was left to enjoy in peace the solitude she preferred; her interested friends and admirers piqued into accusing her of eccentricity or affectation. This was the happiest period of the life of Selina, and would have left her nothing to desire, could she but have seen her beloved mistress less haunted and pained by the memory of the past. Treated more as a friend than a dependent, she learned to know the fine qualities of the Duchess, and with this knowledge her affection and devotion to her increased.

Months rolled away tranquilly, the Duchess pursuing the even tenor of her way, dispensing happiness around her, and almost worshipped by all who had opportunities of judging her. Never was her name mentioned in any cottage, for miles and miles in her neighbourhood, that blessings did not follow it; and never did she lay her head on her pillow, without knowing that she had, during the preceding day, conferred benefits on all requiring her aid. Yet still the happiness diffused by her to others

brought not that boon to herself; one fatal remembrance poisoned her existence, and embittered every hour of it.

And now a great change became apparent in the Duchess of Glenallen. Her health, which had continued delicate ever since her severe illness, began to betray such unequivocal symptoms of decay, as to seriously alarm Selina, and plunge Madame Fanchon into despair. A hectic cough, pain in the side, universal lassitude, and sleepless nights, too surely announced that remorse and grief had impaired, if not wholly destroyed her constitution.

"Ah! Mademoiselle, Mademoiselle," would Madame Fanchon say, "*ce cher ange* will soon leave us, will become *un ange au ciel*, unless we can persuade her to go to London, and have a consultation of physicians. It break my heart to see her vid dat bright pink spot on her cheek, and her beautiful eyes so much more brilliant dan ven she vas in health. Vell did I know dat if ever she did vat vas wrong, she never could be happy any more. De vorld might pardon, but she vouldn't forgive herself.

She believed dat her love for dat bad man vas to be almost excused by his goodness; and she, judging him by her own noble heart, tought him perfect. It vas dis belief dat supported her against de stings of remorse, ven she tought he adored her; for even den dere vere times ven she vas so *malheureuse* that I trembled lest she should go to de Duke and tell him all. But ven she found him so *ingrat*, so base, her sin did appear so moche de vorse in her own eyes, dat she no longer had courage to struggle against de regret dat has consumed her, for having lost her own esteem. Dere be dose, Mademoiselle, and de Duchesse is von of dem who have de heart so noble, so fine, dat ven dey have lost deir own respect, dey cannot ever more have von moment's peace or health, and vont to be proud of de man for whom dey have lost it, and to believe dat *he* at least values de terrible sacrifice dat dey have made. But ven even dis belief is gone, and dat every excuse to satisfy deir own wounded conscience has fallen avay, den, oh! den, Mademoiselle, de proud heart break, de health goes, and dey die."

Often was Selina reminded of the last days of Lady Almondbury, as she contemplated the changed aspect of the Duchess—the same attenuated form, the same faded, yet still lovely face. A conviction of her danger had taken possession of the Duchess's mind, and its effect was a more constant attention to her religious duties, and a greater composure of spirits. Madame Fanchon urged her mistress daily to go to London for medical advice.

"It will be of no use, my good Fanchon," would she answer; "I feel that my days are numbered, and wish to end them tranquilly here."

At length her repeated entreaties induced the Duchess to consent to go to London.

"Poor old faithful creature!" observed her Grace to Selina; "although I know how useless it is, and dislike the fatigue of the journey, and leaving this quiet spot, I cannot refuse a request of hers, so continually urged."

The journey was undertaken; propped by pillows the invalid reclined in her carriage, Selina and Fanchon seated opposite to her; nor when they reached the railway, would she

quit it, so much did she dread encountering the additional move, or meeting strangers. The coach—a roomy and commodious landau—was the last of the train, and, immediately before it, was a box containing horses; they had only proceeded a short way when the movement of the carriage became so violent and unsteady, that its three occupants were filled with alarm. Something must be wrong, they felt persuaded; and, in a terror not to be described, they clung to the holders to avoid being dashed against each other. Selina looked out of the window, and screamed, to attract attention, but her cries were drowned in the stunning noise of the train, and the large vehicle, filled with horses, in front completely masked them from the carriages that preceded it. Every moment the movement of the coach grew more violent; and it now became evident to those within it, that the braces on one side had given way, for the body of the carriage was whirled on its side, half over the truck. The imperial, partly unfastened, swung from side to side, as the coach, impelled along with a fearful velocity, was threatened every moment to be shattered

to pieces. The Duchess, thrown on the lower side, soon became insensible; Selina and Fanchon offered up prayers, deeming that all hope of mortal aid was now over, when, on entering a tunnel, the half-prostrate carriage was dashed with such violence against the side of the arch, that it was wholly disengaged from the truck, and shattered to pieces. Selina lost all consciousness the moment this occurred, and when restored to animation, found herself in a room, surrounded by half-a-dozen persons, who had all been occupied about her. For several minutes she could not remember what had happened, but gazed on the strangers in surprise. By degrees she became aware of her situation, and in alarm called for the Duchess — for Fanchon. Instead of her agonized inquiries being answered, she was told she must not speak; that she must continue perfectly quiet; and then she became sensible of great pain in her head, and in several parts of her person. She had been placed on a bench, near an open window, at one of the stations; and while she lay there, overcome by bodily torture and terror, the inquiries, unanswered by those around

her, were solved by the conversation carried on outside the window. "We saw the coach thrown on one side," said the speaker, "and expected it would be dashed to pieces. We were on the bridge, and shouted, and ran with all our might, but, Lord bless you! what chance had we of overtaking the train that rushed madly on, as if the devil himself was driving it! or of our voices being heard, when that shrieking, puffing engine drowns every other sound. Oh, it was a terrible sight! And then, when we saw the train going to enter the tunnel, we knew it must all soon be over with the coach, which was overhanging on the right side of the truck; and, sure enough, it was dashed up against the arch, and fell to pieces in a moment. In the shock it was disengaged from the truck. We shouted for assistance, and ran to the carriage. Oh, what a frightful sight it was to see! One of the women,—they say it was the mistress,—was quite dead. A piece of the wood of the carriage had struck her on the temple, and the blood had streamed all over her. Her death, they say,

must have been instantaneous. The old woman opened her eyes once, looked at the dead lady, groaned, and never moved afterwards, although the doctors tried all their skill with both. The other young woman got a bad cut on the back of the head, and is dreadfully bruised, but they say she may recover. 'Twas lucky for her that the train stopped at this station, for there was no less than two doctors travelling by it, and they have been doing all they can for the poor young creature."

Selina listened with intense interest to the recapitulation of the fearful scene, in which she had taken a part, her eyes closed, as if to shut it out from her sight; and, as it concluded, she uttered a piercing shriek, and again relapsed into insensibility. For many days her life was in the utmost danger, and she was wholly unconscious of everything passing around her.

During that time a coroner's inquest had taken place, and the last mournful duties were performed to the dead.

Youth, and a good constitution, had enabled the poor sufferer to survive the injuries she had

sustained, and the violent fever that had followed them; and when restored to convalescence, she found the kind-hearted Mrs. Steadfast watching by her bed. The husband of that worthy woman having read in the newspaper the details of the frightful catastrophe, had despatched her to take charge of Selina; and she had been many days with her before the invalid was aware of the fact. Her presence, and soothing attention, produced the most favourable effect. The state of bodily weakness, too, to which Selina was reduced, left her a passive, rather than a violent mourner, for the mistress she had learned to love so fondly, and the good-natured, poor Fanchon, from whom she had experienced nothing but kindness ever since she had known her. She would remain for hours lost in thought, questioning herself whether it could indeed be true, that the lovely being, whose sweet voice still lingered in her ear, whose gentleness and considerate kindness had been evinced in a thousand nameless, but touching ways, ever since she had entered her abode, was gone for ever; and sincere and deep was the grief of Selina.

Many were the tears shed by her as her thoughts dwelt on the terrible catastrophe that had deprived her of the best, the gentlest of mistresses. Although deeply grateful to the Almighty for the preservation of her own life, she could not be consoled for the loss of her mistress; and her sorrow, though not loud and boisterous, became a settled sentiment in her breast, the effect of which greatly retarded her recovery.

The mortal remains of the Duchess and her faithful old servant Fanchon had been removed for interment in the church adjoining her late abode, while Selina had been struggling between life and death in a brain fever. Frequently did the poor girl revert to the last time she had seen her, pale as marble, in a deep swoon, wholly insensible of what was passing around her. The frantic cries of poor Fanchon, the terrible velocity of the movement of the vehicle that contained all three, until the final crash, were remembered as a fearful but vivid dream that haunted her. And now—all was over.

Again she was houseless. Her beautiful, her good mistress was gone, she humbly hoped, to

that Heaven to which her deep and never-ceasing remorse for the one sin of her young life had entitled her. Yes, penitence so sincere must plead for her before her Almighty and merciful Father; and this confidence in the bliss she was now enjoying became the only source of consolation to Selina.

When able to be removed she accompanied Mrs. Steadfast to London, and in a few days after despatched a note announcing her arrival to Mrs. Fraser. In her present state she longed to see that amiable and gentle being, and was not without a hope that she might again enter into her establishment, so warmly had that lady pressed her to do so when she had last seen her. The note was brought back by the messenger, with the intelligence that Mrs. Fraser, with her mother and sisters, had gone abroad, and were not expected back to England for a year. This news inflicted a severe disappointment on Selina, for she had counted much on receiving comfort from her for whom she entertained so sincere a regard.

Mrs. Steadfast, alarmed by the continued

weakness of Selina, called in a skilful physician, who, made acquainted with the recent affliction she had experienced, advised to have her removed to a milder climate, which, with a total change of scene, he thought would be the most effectual means for her restoration to health.

But how is this advice to be carried into effect? thought the excellent couple, under whose roof Selina was sojourning.

"Let us wait, my dear, until she gets a little better," said Mrs. Steadfast to her husband, "and we may hear of some lady going abroad, and requiring an attendant. I often read in the newspaper inquiries of this nature."

"In the meanwhile," replied her husband, "we must manage to get Miss Stratford into the fresh air as much as possible. Our son is such a good steady lad, and drives so carefully, that he can take her out for a couple of hours every day in our gig, and that will set her up."

This kind plan was carried into execution; and in the course of a few weeks the glow of health, which revisited the cheeks of Selina, and her returning strength, proclaimed how judi-

cious and advantageous it had proved. Yet returning health did not restore her broken spirits; and as her kind host and hostess marked this, they bethought themselves of the physician's advice of change of scenery, to divert the invalid's mind from the painful topic that unceasingly filled it. They inquired among their friends; looked into the advertisements in the newspapers, and at length found one that seemed likely to suit their young friend.

"A lady of distinction," so stated the advertisement, "about to visit the continent, requires a young person of good education to fill the place of *femme de chambre*. She will be expected to read aloud to her mistress, to act occasionally as her amanuensis, and to keep her accounts."

"Why, it seems the very thing, my dear," observed Mr. Steadfast. "How very few *femmes-de-chambre* could be able to fill this double capacity, and Miss Stratford happens to be precisely one of the few."

"Yes, she is indeed, and I trust she may be engaged," said his wife.

The advertisement was answered, an appoint-

ment made, and Selina, in consequence, waited on the Lady Caldersfoot. The house was one of small dimensions, but of great pretension, situated in Wilton Place. The hall was covered with plaster brackets, on which stood innumerable diminutive casts of the most celebrated works of antiquity. The staircase was decorated in a similar style; and in the drawing-room, into which she was ushered by a footman in a livery more remarkable for gaudiness than good taste, the walls were nearly hidden by a number of pictures, so execrably bad, that the eye of Selina, lately accustomed to look on works by the best masters, turned from them with surprise, and a conviction that the taste and knowledge of their owner must indeed be very defective. To the frames of these vile daubs were affixed the names of the most remarkable painters, to whose style and manner they did not present even the slightest resemblance. They had not even the merit of being bad copies of the masters. Coarse Dutch furniture, painted brown, and picked out in gold, as the dealers term it, next attracted her attention; the chairs

and sofas covered with stamped cotton velvet. The curtains were, as upholsterers say, to match, and the table-covers of the same material. Mirrors, of small dimensions, in brown and gilt frames, decorated the room. On the mantelpiece and tables were placed various articles of China, of a quality that would have thrown the author of Vatheck into a fever, such wretched specimens were they, mixed with a quantity of trumpery, the refuse of cheap *bric-à-brac* shops, but which were labelled as the productions of Benvenuto Cellini, and the masters of his time. German glasses, of fantastic forms, were marked as *crystal de roche*; and old metal boxes incrusted with false stones, that could not impose on any one for the real, were placed under glass shades; as if things of some value. A few very ill-painted miniatures were scattered around the tables; and a gaudy carpet, of so thin a substance as to betray the forms of the boards of the floor beneath it, completed the *ensemble* of the room in which Selina was left some twenty minutes before Lady Caldersfoot made her appearance. A

striking similarity between the room and the owner instantly struck Selina, for in both brown and gilding predominated. The lady herself, of a brown colour, was attired in brown silk, not remarkable for its freshness. Her curls —and they were evidently only hers by right of purchase — were brown; and chains and bracelets, of what, in modern advertising phraseology, is termed mosaic gold, completed the costume of a most remarkably ill-looking old lady.

"Ah, Miss Stratford!" said she, examining Selina through her eye-glass; "I believe I am right, your name *is* Miss Stratford." Selina bowed assent. "Let us go into my library. I never feel so comfortable anywhere else;" and she led the way to a room that opened into the drawing-room. "Pray be seated."

The library, as it was termed, was a large closet, lined with book-shelves, on which stood, ranged in goodly show, rows of half-bound novels and periodicals. Nothing could be more meretricious, or in worse taste than this room; the hangings, the chairs, and sofas, crowded

into it, leaving hardly space to move, were of the most ill-assorted colours; the window-panes were pasted over with gaudy-coloured paper, in imitation of stained glass, and the table was littered with inkstands, presented, as Lady Caldersfoot took care to inform Selina, by the greatest men of our time, in recognition of her talents, and in gratitude for the delight and instruction their exercise had afforded them. Selina could not help remarking, that, if the good-will of the donors of these gifts was to be estimated by their beauty or value, it could not be very great, for the inkstands were mere trumpery, such as may be found at any of the cheap repositories for modern antiques.

"Of course, you know my writings?" said Lady Caldersfoot.

"I have not that pleasure, Madam," replied Selina. "Hitherto, my reading has not included works of fiction."

"How very strange! I had thought that a person could not have been found in this country, or, indeed, in Europe, unacquainted with

my writings. Of course, you have heard of my literary reputation?"

Selina again bowed an assent, for which her conscience reproached her, but which prudence exacted; for, short as had been her acquaintance with Lady Caldersfoot, she had seen enough of her to be aware, that, to confess the fact of never having heard of her Ladyship's fame, would be deemed nothing short of an offence of deep dye.

"Fame, as the divine Dante says, Miss Stratford, is not to be lightly won. Mine has been purchased at the cost of health. Nightly vigils, passed in poring over the works of philosophers and sages, and days spent in giving to the world the fruits of my studies, after their passing through the alembic of my mind, have impaired my health. The old story, the sword has worn out the scabbard; and I must seek a more genial clime to renovate my frame. You speak French and Italian fluently, I suppose?"

"Tolerably, Madam."

"You write a legible hand, I know, by your answer to my advertisement. Your appearance

proves a superiority over the ordinary class of persons offering themselves as *femmes de chambre*, and this peculiarity suits me; for, such is my respect for literature, that I think no lady, devoting herself to that noble profession, should have her person approached by a mere menial. Her handmaiden should be a person of refinement, of education, capable of comprehending the elevated thoughts and lofty aspirations she may be called on to copy on paper."

Selina listened with surprise to this exordium, delivered with an affectation of manner that rendered it perfectly ludicrous.

"What are your terms, Miss Stratford?"

"Forty pounds was the sum I received in both my last situations."

"That is a great deal; but I suppose the ladies you were with, were not literary, had not, like me, achieved fame, consequently you had a right, where no lustre could be reflected on you, to receive a higher remuneration for your services. With me it will be wholly different: a portion of my celebrity will extend to you; and, therefore, you will not think me unreason-

able, if, instead of forty, I offer you twenty-five pounds, which sum I never exceed. Indeed, I could find many young persons, who, for the sake of approaching my person, would gladly come without any salary; but I prefer you."

Amused by the absurdity and pretensions of the lady, Selina felt disposed to accept the terms offered. To go to a new scene, and a better climate, were strong inducements, in her present weak health and depressed spirits; so she acceded.

"With whom did you last live?" inquired Lady Caldersfoot.

"With the Duchess of Glenallen," replied Selina; and tears filled her eyes as she uttered the name.

"What! the beautiful Duchess of Glenallen, who met such a fearful death some weeks ago?"

"The same, Madam."

"And you were the young person so miraculously saved? Why, the whole thing was one of the most remarkable, most tragical catastrophes in modern times. Not that such acci-

dents are not common enough in our days; but a Duchess, a young, a beautiful, and a rich Duchess, who had retired from the world, rejected suitors by dozens, and all on account of grief for the death of a very dissolute man, old enough to be her grandfather, makes all the difference; it changes the whole thing. I was really thinking of turning the event to account, of writing a novel, to be entitled, 'The Inconsolable; or, the Railroad Disaster.' I had even traced out a few sketches in my note-book. I had described the last scene, when, conscious of her impending destruction, she cried out, 'My beloved, I come to thee!' Yes, I shall be delighted to have you, for you can of course give me every particular, and then I can idealize the whole. Mere facts are nothing, everything must be placed in a romantic, a dramatic point of view; and in effecting this I shine."

Selina's astonishment was so great, that it revealed itself in her countenance, and Lady Caldersfoot, observing it, said, "I see you are surprised. This is because you have not lived with persons of genius. They seize, and make

their own, all that can be worked up into books, and do it so admirably, that even those, who enacted the *rôles* they describe, can hardly detect them when they peruse the work. Glorious attribute of genius! that can invest common, or even painful circumstances, with an interest that it only can create."

The engagement was made, the reference to Mrs. Steadfast was found satisfactory, and Selina entered her new situation three days after.

CHAPTER XII.

THREE days after Selina entered the establishment of Lady Caldersfoot, that lady, attended by her and a man-servant, left Wilton Place for the Continent; which event, the evening previous to their departure, was notified by her Ladyship's own pen in the following terms, and despatched to a fashionable morning paper for insertion.

"Among the recent departures from town we have to announce that of the Lady Calderfoot and suite, who left her ladyship's elegant and classic residence in Wilton Place this day, *en route* for the Continent. It is said, we know not with what truth, that this celebrated authoress and charming lady will occupy her graphic pen on a work of great importance, connected with the progress of literature and the fine arts in France and Italy, which no person is so capable of tracing as her Ladyship,

whose profound knowledge and exquisite taste, as well as deep erudition, peculiarly fit her for the task. The distinguished *literati* in all the capitals through which this celebrated lady will pass, will no doubt eagerly seize the opportunity afforded them of offering their homage to the English Corinne."

Instructions were left, that several copies of the paper were to be forwarded to Paris after her ladyship, in order, as she explained to Selina, that publicity should be given to her movements in other countries as well as in her own.

Arrived at Dover, Lady Caldersfoot proceeded to the Ship Inn, where she instantly summoned the proprietor to her presence.

"Pray, Sir," said she, "is the Governor at present at the Castle?"

"No Madam, he left yesterday morning for town."

"How very unfortunate; but it is all my own fault. I should have apprised him that I was coming, and then he would have taken care not to be out of the way."

The innkeeper looked at her Ladyship with surprise, for neither her own appearance, nor that of her carriage or servant, had impressed him with a very high opinion of her grandeur.

"It may be as well, Sir," resumed the lady, "that you inform the civil and military authorities here of my arrival. They probably may wish to mark their respect by some of those attentions usually paid to persons of distinction, and might feel hurt if left in ignorance of my being here."

"Who shall I say, Madam?" inquired her host.

"The Lady Caldersfoot. Of course you know my name."

"I can't say I do, your Ladyship; but so many lords and ladies pass through here, that I can't remember names."

"Do you never read, Sir?"

"Oh! yes, your Ladyship, the newspapers. I hav'n't time for anything more."

"But, surely, in the newspapers you must have seen reviews of my works, or extracts taken from the evening papers."

"Perhaps, my lady, I may; but as I did not know your Ladyship's name, I can't be certain."

"I am Lady Caldersfoot, and my celebrity has, I believe I may say, become European."

"I make no doubt, your Ladyship."

"Will you order your best room to be prepared for me? People will be here after, if not at present, curious to see the room and bed I slept in. A day may come when fragments of the curtains of the bed in which I have reposed will be purchased, as those of Voltaire's at Ferney have been. The innkeeper looked confounded. "Send my domestic," continued Lady Caldersfoot, "and have a roast chicken and half a pint of Sherry served up for my dinner. If my arrival here becomes generally known, many persons will doubtless apply for my autographs; this generally occurs wherever I go, and as I do not like to refuse, you may be the medium of applying for them; and now you may withdraw;" which Mr. Boniface did, evidently not a little puzzled what to make of his strange guest.

Thomas Whitlecombe, the footman, now

made his appearance, bowing and pulling the forelock of his hair. Thomas was a new servant, having been sent up from one of the provinces only ten days before, and was as little skilled in the usages of a London footman as in knowledge of the world. He believed his mistress to be a very great lady, whose orders he must strictly obey, and he was utterly incapable of judging the propriety or absurdity of them.

"Thomas," said Lady Caldersfoot, "I am now going to a foreign land, and, to spare disagreeable comments, it will be necessary for you to change your name from the rustic one of Thomas to Theodore. Both names begin with a T, so that the mark on your clothes need not be altered. Remember, therefore, that from this day forth you are to answer only to the name of Theodore."

"But, please your Ladyship, if how be as I was taken up for going by a false name? I have heard it is against the law."

"No, there is not the least danger of that, so you need not be alarmed. And, now, mind

what I say. When you go down stairs, be particular in talking of me as much as possible in the servants' room, or in the tap."

"Oh! my lady, would that be right? Why, if your Ladyship will believe me, I was almost agoing to blow up two chaps and a couple of women-servants in the room down stairs, for talking of their masters and mistresses. Lord bless us, what things they did say!"

"You mistake my instructions, Theodore. I don't mean you to talk as they did."

"God forbid, my lady; for I wouldn't do such a thing for all the world."

"No, Theodore, you are merely to say that you have the honour of serving the most celebrated lady in England, the greatest authoress."

"And if I may make bold to ask, what is an hauthoress, your ladyship?"

"A lady who writes books, and instructs the world. You are to say that in London all eyes are turned on your mistress; that the most costly gifts are sent to her, by those delighted with her writings, and that publishers buy them at the greatest prices."

"I've been a thinking, your Ladyship, that if you'd write down all you have told me to say, in large writing, I'd have it cried by the town-crier; he'd do it for a couple of shillings, and that would make it known better than all I could say, for I've not got a good memory for remembering hard words, or saying much at a time."

"*Quelle bête!*" muttered the lady, while Selina felt the greatest difficulty to avoid smiling. "No, no, Theodore, the town-crier must not be thought of; but it is positively necessary that you make all the persons you meet know that your mistress is a grand lady and a great authoress."

"Dang it all," said Thomas, scratching his head, "I wish I may be able to remember that word hau-hauthoress. If it was put down in a plain hand, I'd learn it by heart, so I would."

"Print it for him, Miss Stratford."

Selina did as she was told, and Theodore, as he was henceforth to be called, retired, spelling over, as he withdrew, the word written down for him.

"And now you had better go and see my room arranged," said Lady Caldersfoot, "you can inform the landlady or housemaid, or both, who I am. When persons of celebrity, like me, travel, every one is curious to learn something about them. I have ordered a chicken for my dinner; half of it will be quite sufficient for me, and the other half I will leave for you. This will save money, so come down in about a quarter of an hour after my dinner is served; I will then have finished, and you can take my place; and as I shall order a dumb waiter instead of a living one, nobody will be the wiser, and I shall have only one dinner to pay for instead of two."

The meanness of this proceeding was so extremely disagreeable to Selina, that she would have preferred going without a dinner to adopting it; but she saw that Lady Caldersfoot was not a woman to be reasoned with,—and, what was more, that she would resent any remonstrance. One part, however, of her Ladyship's instructions Selina did not comply with, namely, she did not enlighten either the hostess or the

chamber-maid on the celebrity of Lady Caldersfoot, although the former threw herself in her way with an evident curiosity, probably excited by the communication made to her by her husband after his interview with the lady.

"How many is the table to be laid for, Madam?" inquired the quick, bustling waiter, who, with a table-cloth and napkin in one hand, and a knife-tray in the other, entered the room.

"For one only; and, as I don't like attendance at dinner, place a dumb waiter near my chair."

The waiter obeyed the order, and in due time the roast chicken was served. Whether Lady Caldersfoot's appetite was more than usually keen, or that the chicken was unusually small, cannot be well explained; but the result was, that so slender a portion of the carcass was left for Selina, the legs and wings having totally disappeared, that a bird, however delicate, would have been exposed to no danger from repletion had he picked it.

"Don't use a plate, the dish will serve as well, and prevent observation," said Lady Cal-

dersfoot. "Sit down in my chair, and I will look out of the window while you dine."

Selina felt like a receiver of stolen goods while she eat the small share of food left for her; and was so apprehensive of being detected in the operation by the waiter, that she hurried through it as rapidly as she could.

"As you never drink wine," observed Lady Caldersfoot, "I need leave none for you." And taking the decanter, she emptied the portion of its contents which she had not consumed into one of the *flaçons* of her dressing-box, which she had kept in the room, as it now appeared, for the purpose. "As one must pay for every thing in an inn," continued she, "I always make it a point to have the value of my money. You may now retire to your room, and I will ring for the waiter to remove the things," pointing to the fragments on the table.

The host and hostess of the inn,—no bad judges of appearance,—had on seeing Selina set her down as a lady. When, however, they found that she was not to dine with Lady Caldersfoot, and that she had assisted the

chamber-maid in arranging her Ladyship's room, they began to think she must act in the capacity of *femme de chambre.*

"Well, there is really now no means of judging who persons are by their dress or air," said the hostess; "I could have sworn the young person was a gentlewoman."

"Yes, she is indeed more like one than that crazy old woman she accompanies," replied the husband.

"The poor thing looks much too genteel to be put in the servants' room with the others," observed the hostess.

"I think, my dear, it would be as well to ask her to dine with us."

"Just as you please, my dear."

"And," resumed she, "I havn't the heart to put her into one of those dark closets, into which we generally thrust ladies'-maids. No, I'll let her keep the room next her mistress's, which I had chosen for her when I believed she was a lady, and I'll step up and ask her to dine with us."

Grateful for this civility, Selina politely declined it, alleging a headach, which she really

had, as an excuse. Her spirits were depressed, for she could not help contrasting the treatment already experienced from her present mistress, and the prospect of a continuance of it, with that received from her lamented one, the Duchess of Glenallen, or the kind and amiable Mrs. Fraser. To be the companion, nay more, the servant of so very absurd and ridiculous a woman as Lady Caldersfoot, was highly mortifying, and must inevitably expose her to constant annoyance. While making these reflections, she was summoned to the presence of that lady.

"I wish to walk on the Pier," said she; "the news of my arrival has doubtlessly spread, and people will be impatient to see me. I will call at the circulating libraries, and inquire for my own books. I always make it a point to do so when I am travelling—it helps the sale; and I enjoy the surprise and delight of the librarian when I disclose who I am."

The dress of Lady Caldersfoot was more remarkable for its variety of colours and meretricious ornaments, than for richness or good

taste; and assorted so ill with her plain and highly rouged face, as always to attract an attention that would have been anything but agreeable to most women, but which she considered as a homage paid to her imagined celebrity.

Selina soon found herself painfully embarrassed by the rude staring directed towards her companion, who, instead of being distressed, or attributing it to the true cause, was evidently much gratified, and observed,—

"It is quite clear these good people know who I am, for you see how they follow me. This is one of the consequences of fame; but I am so accustomed to it, that I rather look for than seek to avoid it."

"Ah! here is a circulating library;" and entering it she said, "Pray, Sir, have you got 'The Delicate Dilemma?'" and Lady Caldersfoot addressed the librarian, assuming an air of mingled dignity and condescension.

"Yes, Ma'am, I know we have it; but it is so little inquired for, that I really hardly know where to put my hand on it."

And the man commenced searching for the

work. Selina stole a glance at her Ladyship, on whose countenance anger and indignation strove for mastery.

"If you cannot find 'The Delicate Dilemma,'" observed she, "let me have the 'Foibles of Fashion,' by the same distinguished authoress."

"I'm very sorry, Ma'am, but I have not got any other of the works of Lady Caldersfoot. Finding that they are never asked for, I don't order them. Indeed, the one I am looking for has been always sent back to me in a few hours, with an observation that it was unreadable."

"Which proves," said Lady Caldersfoot, "that your subscribers must be wholly deficient in taste and judgment." And she walked with a stately air out of the shop, leaving its proprietor perfectly astonished. "What an idiot that monster in human shape is!" observed the angry authoress. "I was half tempted to declare my name, and overwhelm him with confusion. What Goths the inhabitants of Dover must be! But let us proceed to another circulating library."

In their progress in search of one, Lady Caldersfoot continued to attract so much attention, that her companion felt really ashamed.

"That must be some old Frenchwoman, painted up and dressed in such an outlandish fashion," said a rough-looking sailor to another, as they passed, rudely staring at Lady Caldersfoot.

"My heyes," observed a second passer-by, "what a crazy-looking old frigate!"

None of these insulting comments escaped the ears of the person to whom they were directed; and so greatly did they irritate her, that Selina, although fully sensible of, and disgusted with, the vanity and folly which had occasioned them, pitied Lady Caldersfoot. They entered a second circulating library, and, as in the former one, the lady inquired for one of her novels. The same, or nearly similar, answers were given to her; and now her indignation conquering her prudence, she told the owner of the shop that his subscribers must be the most stupid and tasteless readers in the world,

not to have demanded the writings of so celebrated an authoress.

"Why, as to that, Madam," replied the man, piqued into anger by her sweeping censure on his customers, "I believe my subscribers are rather above than below the general class; for as Dover has a continual succession of distinguished and fashionable stationary visitors, as well as those who pass through, going to, or coming from France, there must surely be some good judges of literature among them, and I have never before been asked for the works of the authoress you have named."

"You have surely seen the reviews on these works," said the lady, "and the frequent complimentary mention of them in extracts in the newspapers taken from evening papers?"

"Yes, Madam, I have, but such puffs have no influence here. A good-natured editor often speaks favourably of books of which his opinion is quite different; and extracts from an evening paper, we all know to be nothing more nor less than paid advertisements from the publisher. Then, madam, we are all aware that publishers

have vehicles of their own for puffing works, when editors or critics in the regular line are too honest to help them to sell bad books by praising them."

"And pray, Sir, how did you acquire this intimate knowledge of the secrets of publishers?" demanded Lady Caldersfoot haughtily.

"By having lived some years with a fashionable publisher in London, Madam," was the reply.

"I will not give you any more trouble, Sir," said Lady Caldersfoot, leaving the shop, angered beyond measure by the disclosure made by the librarian, and especially in the presence of Selina, whom she wished to be deeply impressed with the value of extracts from evening papers and favourable reviews. That *she* should now be let into the secrets of publishers, a circumstance which must lower the fame of her mistress in her eyes, was most vexatious, and, quite disgusted with Dover librarians, she retraced her steps to the inn. In the hall she met the proprietor, and inquired of him, "Whether he had notified her arrival?"

"Yes, my lady."

"And what has been the result?"

"I was told, your Ladyship, that your coming or going was nothing to the authorities. It was only to Royalty or Ambassadors that they were to pay honours."

"Didn't you tell them who I am—what my celebrity is?"

"Yes, my lady, and they laughed in my face, and asked me who told me of it? and when I answered, that I had it from your Ladyship's own lips, they laughed more and more, and so I came away."

"Brutes, illiterate brutes!" exclaimed the lady, "have any requests for my autographs been made?"

"Not one, your Ladyship; and though I offered them to all the travellers in the coffee-room, just out of civility, no one wanted them."

"Well, this is most extraordinary, most unprecedented, I must say, and proves that there must be no appreciation of literature, or those whose works adorn it, in Dover. Be so good

as to send my domestic," and Lady Caldersfoot, with an air of the utmost dignity, ascended the stairs. The man soon appeared, his face flushed, and his eyes emitting a lustre very unusual to them. "I sent for you, Theodore," said his mistress, "to inform you, that I will sail by the morning's steamer to Calais. Go, and secure passages for me and my suite; mind you say, —the celebrated Lady Caldersfoot and her suite!"

"Yes, your Ladyship, but I hope you do not expect me to tell 'em that your Ladyship is a hauthoress."

"And why not, pray?"

"Because it may get me into trouble, your Ladyship."

"Get you into trouble!" repeated the lady, in astonishment.

"Yes, my Lady. Why I have had such a piece of work in the servants' room as I never had in all my born days, and all because I did as your Ladyship told me. I said you were a celebrated hauthoress, and all the rest of it, as your Ladyship desired me; when, would you

believe it! one of the ladies'-maids, a himperent pert cretur as ever I seed in my life, begins for to laugh outright; and when I asked her what she laughed at, she said your Ladyship was one of the poorest authoresses in all England. I up and told her, your Ladyship paid your way, like any other lady, when she burst out louder than ever, and said she didn't mean anything about money matters, though she had heard you were very stingy. 'Then what do you mean, Miss?' says I. 'I mean,' says she, that your mistress's books is all stuff and nonsense, for when I was in my last place, and she sent her novel as a present to Lady Millenton, her ladyship laughed downright; and when I offered to cut the leaves open, her ladyship told me there was no occasion, for she should never read a line of it. This put my blood up, and I said Lady Millenton was no better than she should be, for being so ungrateful for a present. And then her fellow-servant, who I believe is her sweetheart too, for he reddened up when he saw she was affronted, asked me if I know'd what a hauthoress was? I said, to be sure

I did. 'Then,' says he, 'a hauthoress is no better than a liar, who invents all sorts of stories, and writes 'em down, and gets money for 'em. Why it's a burning shame, so it is,' says he, 'to get money for lies, when poor sarvants are scolded and discharged if *they* are found telling 'em.'"

"Monsters! ignorant stupid monsters!" exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot, "not to be able to perceive the difference between the noble inspirations of genius and the moral turpitude of falsehood."

"Human patience couldn't stand it no longer, your Ladyship, so I gives him my mind. He grew more saucy, and we were coming to blows, when the landlord came and told me your Ladyship wanted me."

"You must treat such ignorant brutes with contempt, Theodore," said his mistress, assuming an air of dignity.

"That's just what I was going to do, your Ladyship. Whenever any man hinsults me, I give him a good hiding, if I can—that's my way of showing my contempt."

"Go now, Theodore, and engage the places at the packet-office; but be sure to tell that I am the celebrated Lady Caldersfoot."

"Well, my Lady, I hope no harm will come of it; but, to tell the truth, I'm almost afraid I'll be getting into trouble wherever we go, for I can't bear to see folks laughing, or to hear 'em call your Ladyship a liar."

"Oh! that perfidious Lady Millenton," exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot. "How terrible to find one has been deceived where one had most trusted! Cæsar felt not more despair when he saw that the mortal wound was inflicted by his friend, and exclaimed, 'Et tu, Brute!' than I now do. Well may I say, 'And you, Lady Millenton!'"

CHAPTER XIII.

The remainder of the evening was spent by Lady Calderfoot in uttering reflections on the ingratitude, envy, hatred, malice, and all uncharitableness of the world, and particularly the female portion of it.

"Oh, Selina!" exclaimed she, "could you but know the trials I have experienced in this way, you would indeed wonder how, with a frame so delicate, and so exquisitely sensitive a mind and heart, I have been able to resist them. This Lady Millenton, whose duplicity has been this evening revealed to me, I believed to be my most devoted friend. How many times has she assured me, that my writings were the solace of her solitary hours, that I was a second De Staël! She has, many a time and oft, addressed notes to me as Corinne, and has

even requested me to have my portrait painted as Corinne, at the Capitol. But there is one consolation in all such trials. I know the praise came flowing from the heart, forced from it by excess of honest, fervent admiration. The after detraction is the offspring of base envy, wrung from it by seeing the fame, the celebrity accorded me. Thus, as the bee can extract nothing but honey, even from poisonous flowers, I can extract good from evil. However, such trials enable me to know the human heart, and this is the secret of my power of painting its feelings so admirably well. After the first pangs of disappointment are a little subdued, I reflect that my own superiority has elicited the envy, from whose workings I suffer, and I remember that great genius ever has, and ever will be, pursued by envious detractors. I made the reputation of beauty for Lady Millenton, as well as for many other of my false friends. I took her for my heroine, painted exaggerated pictures of her person, flattered it as well as her mind, and got my publishers to print a key to the characters in the book, by which it became

known who were meant. To be sure, this plan was useful in extending the sale; for one of the most successful baits to catch public curiosity, is to let it be supposed that a novel is filled with personalities. Nevertheless, one has surely reason to expect that the common-place women, whom an authoress elevates on a pedestal, and gives a sort of celebrity to, ought to be grateful. But, alas! such is the ingratitude of persons, that their sense of obligation is forgotten in the more acute ones of envy and jealousy. Now, I am convinced that the woman, who Theodore told me had spoken so insultingly about my authorship, is a paid agent, sent down here by my enemies, to incite the ignorant to affront me. You look incredulous, Selina, but you know not the persecutions to which persons of great genius are exposed. Yes, I feel now quite certain that the negligence of the civil and military authorities, the rude remarks of the low persons in the street, and the impertinence of the librarians, were the result of the machinations of my enemies, who must have expended great sums to have gained over those people. But this

vast expenditure and trouble, taken to prevent my being honoured with a triumph here, or even an ovation, is the most convincing proof of my celebrity, and the envy it creates. I am, like Rousseau, a martyr to the machinations of my enemies; but my mind being greater, I do not allow them to embitter my life, as they did his."

Selina, who had never before come in contact with one of the *genus irritabile*, began to be seriously alarmed for the sanity of her mistress. Could that poor, misguided woman really believe the gross improbabilities she uttered, or was the whole thing got up to impose on others? was a question she put to herself. But when she reflected on the weakness and vanity of Lady Caldersfoot, revealed by innumerable proofs every hour since she had been with her, she began to think that that lady was a monomaniac, mad only on the one subject, and that one a false estimate of her own talents.

When the bill was brought next morning, Lady Caldersfoot carefully read over the items, and added up the total.

"There is a great mistake in this account," said she, ringing the bell. The waiter answered the summons, and she pointed out to him that dinner had been charged to her *femme de chambre* for the previous evening, although she had not had any. "Tea also is charged, which is likewise an error, as the young person partook of none."

"Both were provided, Madam, and it is the regular custom in this house to charge for what has been provided, even though it may not be eaten."

"I must say I think the custom a very improper one, and also that the charges are very high."

"I assure your Ladyship that we never make different prices, whatever may be the station of our customers."

"But when celebrated persons, authors of distinction, for example, whose presence in an inn must draw attention to it, a reduction should surely be made."

"No author has hitherto claimed any such exemption from the general charges of the house,

Madam, and I am sure the proprietor would not consent to make any abatement."

The bill was paid with great reluctance, and the waiter and chambermaid received so small a remuneration, that they were more than half tempted to refuse it, and betrayed by their manner their dissatisfaction. The newspaper, in which was inserted the notice of her departure, written by herself, was sent to the coffee-room, that its occupants should not remain in ignorance of having had so remarkable a lady beneath the same roof with them. Papers were also sent to the proprietors of both the libraries visited the previous evening, her Ladyship being determined, as she said, to cover them with confusion by this proof of the estimation in which she was held by the London world.

When Lady Caldersfoot and suite, as she loved to term her two attendants, had embarked, she desired to speak to the captain of the packet. He was busily engaged at the time, and told her servant so, but her Ladyship was by no means disposed to wait until he was

more at leisure, and kept sending "Theodore," to him, until the latter, unused to the movement and odour peculiar to steam-packets, felt compelled to retire, and was not again visible until the vessel arrived at its destined port. When the captain did present himself before Lady Caldersfoot, she told him that she desired to see him, merely for the purpose of informing him he had on board one of, if not *the* most, distinguished authoresses of England.

"Very proud of the honour, Ma'am, I'm sure," was the reply; "which is the lady?"

"I am the lady, Sir; my name is Lady Caldersfoot." She expected that the captain would evince some symptoms of surprise, and more profound respect than previously; but he simply bowed. "I thought it right, Sir, to inform you of the responsibility you have incurred, when you have on board a public character like myself—one on whom so many eyes are turned, for whose safety so many thousands are interested."

"I hope, my Lady, I know my duty, and that I should take as much care of my vessel and

passengers if I had only the humblest on board, as if I had the greatest."

"Nevertheless, Sir, as Cæsar thought fit to tell the boatman when he embarked, 'You carry Cæsar and his fortunes,' I thought it right to declare who I am."

"Very like, my Lady, but the case is somewhat different. Cæsar, as you say, had his fortune aboard with him, and therefore it was quite proper for him to give notice of it to the captain of the packet."

"You mistake, Sir.

"Coming, coming," said the captain, answering to the repeated calls for him from another part of the deck. "I beg pardon, my Lady, I'm wanted."—"What a rum old un it is!" thought he, as he hurried away.

"You will now have an opportunity of observing the effect of mind over body," said Lady Caldersfoot to Selina, who she kept in close attendance near her; "*I* never suffer the slightest inconvenience from the sea. Intellectual people, I believe, never do. My secret is to keep my thoughts fixed on some elevated point."

"That accounts for the old lady's looking up at the top of the mast ever since we got out of the harbour," observed a plain old man *sotto voce* to his companion.

"But *à-propos* of elevated subjects," resumed Lady Caldersfoot. I am reminded that I must give some advice to the captain. Perhaps you, Sir," addressing herself to the plain old man, "will be so obliging as to inform him that Lady Caldersfoot wishes to speak to him."

"I'm sorry, Ma'am, I can't go to him; but the truth is, it is only by keeping in one posture, and not attempting to move, that I avoid sea-sickness. I have been for some time adopting your plan, Ma'am, of fixing my eyes on the top of the mast, but I can't yet tell whether it will succeed or not."

"*My* plan, Sir?" reiterated Lady Caldersfoot, "I really do not comprehend you. I am not aware of having ever communicated any plan to you, or, indeed, of having ever seen you before!"

"Very true, Ma'am, very true; but I happened to overhear you tell the young lady with

you, that the best mode to avoid sea-sickness was to keep the thoughts fixed on some elevated point, and so I——"

"Totally mistook my meaning, Sir," and the lady moved away with an air of the utmost dignity. "You see, Selina," observed she, "how every word that falls from the lips of a person of celebrity, and, above all, of literary celebrity, is seized hold of. I cannot utter a word that there is not some eavesdropper listening to note it down, in order to transfer it to his diary or commonplace-book. The worst of it is, as in the present instance, people hear the words, but do not comprehend the sense. Only fancy the vulgar person we have just seen, imagining that while my thoughts were ranging through the vast expanse of ether on high, and resuming some of those problems, with regard to the heavens, that have occupied the minds of the greatest philosophers, from the "starry Galileo" to our own Newton, I was thinking of the mainmast-top. So it is, that narrow and uncultivated minds cannot comprehend great ones. But I forgot. I must see

the captain; indeed, it is of vast importance that I should, not only to me, but perhaps to thousands. Go and tell him to come to me."

Selina, much embarrassed to thread her way through the crowd on deck, proceeded in search of the captain, whom she at length found, and requested him to go to Lady Caldersfoot. He seemed in no hurry to attend the summons. Urged, however, by Selina, he came and presented himself before the lady.

"I sent for you, Sir," said she, "to explain a matter that may not only benefit thousands of your future passengers, but be of considerable advantage in securing the cleanliness of your vessel."

"Much obliged, Ma'am," replied the captain, making an awkward attempt at a bow.

"Having turned my thoughts to many grave subjects for benefitting mankind," resumed the lady, "I have ascertained that the occupation of the mental faculties by works of the most spirit-stirring and exciting nature is the only preventative of that most dreadful ailment, sea-sickness."

"Lord love you, Ma'am! it's of no manner of use. I've seen people get sea-sick while their minds were intent on reading the state of the funds, and even while under the excitement of strong liquors."

"How shocking!" exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot. "But you do not comprehend me. I did not refer to the vulgar excitement you imagine. I meant some high intellectual treat. My works, for example. Buy a complete edition of them, leave the books in the cabin, and I am persuaded those who take them up will be so delighted that they will not suffer from sea-sickness, however rough the sea may be."

An arch smile of incredulity played over the lips of the captain.

"Well, my Lady," observed he, "if your Ladyship will send down a set of the books *gratis*, for I can't afford to buy 'em, we'll try the effect."

"I never give away my works, except to the most distinguished of the nobility," replied Lady Caldersfoot haughtily. "I believed I was rendering a service to humanity, as well as

to you, Sir, by recommending this plan to your attention. If you reject it, the fault is not mine: I have done my duty in suggesting it," and she turned away from the captain with an air of offended dignity, while he, making a grimace, meant for the edification of the by-standers, applied the thumb of his right hand to his nose, extending the fingers in a direct line in front of it, and walked away, followed by the laughter of those to whom this vulgar gesture was addressed, leaving Lady Caldersfoot wholly unconscious of the cause of the laughter she heard around her.

"I must elevate my thoughts above this sublunary sphere," said she to Selina. "I always do when shocked by the ignorance and stupidity of the vulgar herd of mankind. Behold the clouds drifting away, and revealing the sun, whose bright beams have dispersed them. Here, Selina, here is my note-book, write down every word I utter, for I feel an inspiration, and the passages noted down will come admirably into my next book,—yes," and the speaker assumed the inspired look of a

sibyl — "even as the sun disperses the clouds, so will knowledge disperse the mists of ignorance, and enlighten those who now dwell in darkness. Oh! how my heart swells and exults at the thought," — and the lady pressed her hand to her heart, and became dreadfully pale. "Hold me Selina, hold me," exclaimed she—

"A basin, a basin," cried out the plain old man; but before it could be brought, a most violent paroxysm of sea-sickness had seized Lady Caldersfoot. "It's no use looking up at the mast, after all, it seems," said the plain old man. "I thought as much. Poor lady, how sick she is, to be sure! Why it's as much as ever the steward can do to hold her up!"

"It's a pity she hadn't some of her own books to read," observed the captain, winking his eye at those around him, "for they'd have kept away the sea-sickness." So prostrated were the spirits and thoughts of Lady Caldersfoot by the violence of her suffering, that when the vessel arrived at Calais she was hardly able to move. She was supported into the room where passengers wait to have their

trunks, &c. examined, and there, with a pallid face, crushed bonnet, and dishevelled locks, she sat the picture of despair.

"Tell them, Selina, *who* I am," said she. "Surely when they know, they will respect genius; they will allow my property to be removed to the inn—they paid this mark of respect to Sir Walter Scott when he visited France; can they do less towards me?"

"I am afraid, Madam, my representation will not have the desired effect," replied Selina, timidly.

"And why not, pray?" asked the lady angrily. "Am I a less distinguished writer—less entitled to homage?"

Urged by this angry remonstrance, Selina advanced to one of the *douaniers*, and, ashamed and embarrassed by her mission, told him, in pure French, that Lady Caldersfoot was an authoress of distinction.

"*Eh, bien, Mademoiselle, tant mieux pour elle; mais qu'est-ce que cela me fait?*"

Selina explained, that she believed it was customary to exempt authors of distinction from

paying duty on their clothes, or even from having them examined, and cited Sir Walter Scott,

"*Valtaire Scote,*" exclaimed the *douanier,* "*mais c'était un homme célèbre, c'est autre chose. Mais pour lui-même, nous n'aurions pu faire exception, malgré tout notre désir de lui faire hommage, si le Gouvernement n'avait pas donné des ordres.*"

Selina returned to Lady Caldersfoot, and related the ill success of her interview with the *douanier.*

"Owing, I am convinced," exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot, "to your not having properly explained my celebrity to him. Were I not too ill, I would have made him sensible of my importance, and of the dishonour to France in not marking its respect and deference to genius and celebrity like mine. Had you told him that I was considered the De Staël of England, the Corinne, he must have felt sensible of the propriety of exempting me from all trouble. His affecting not to know me,—for that he does not know my name and fame I never can believe,—

must be the work of my enemies. "Yes, the wretch has been bribed by them, I am sure."

The *douanier* now approached, and demanded the keys of the dressing-case and trunks of Lady Caldersfoot, who, too ill and languid to argue with him, though greatly disposed to do so, again appealed to Selina to represent to him once more her claim to exemption from his regular rules. "Tell him," said she, "that when the King of the French hears how ill-treated I have been, which his Majesty shall learn from my own lips, the persons belonging to the Custom House will be severely reprimanded."

"*Ah bah! nous verrons cela; dépêchez-vous, Madame,*" said the *douanier*, "*Donnez-moi les clefs?*"

"Do, pray, Madam," whispered Selina.

"*Monsieur,*" replied Lady Caldersfoot, drawing herself up with dignity, "*quand je serai aux Tuilleries avec sa majesté le Roi des Français, je lui dirai que vous ne m'avez pas montré le respect qu'on doit à une femme de génie, une auteresse célèbre comme moi.*"

"*Et en quoi, Madame, ai-je manqué le respect envers vous, s'il vous plait?*"

This dialogue had excited the attention of several of the persons around the interlocutors, and sundry smiles and shrugs of the shoulders were given among them.

"*Dépêchez-vous, Madame, dépêchez-vous, le monde m'attend,*" resumed the *douanier.*

"*Monsieur, je dirai au Roi comme vous vous êtes mal conduisé envers moi, — moi qui suis considerée la Staël, la Corinne même, de la Grande Bretagne.*"

"*Mon Dieu! est-il possible, est-il possible?*" exclaimed the man in a tone of the utmost impatience.

"*Oui, Monsieur, je vous repète que je suis la Staël de la Grande Bretagne.*

"*Enfin, Madame, voulez-vous, oui ou non, donner les clefs?*"

A circle of persons, evidently much amused, were now collected around Lady Caldersfoot, and Selina felt her shame and embarrassment every moment increase, at being with a person who drew such ridicule on herself, and those belonging to her. "Pray, pray, give him the keys," whispered she. "Indeed, you will suffer

in your health from remaining in this place, and being annoyed."

The keys were reluctantly produced, and this very reluctance having led the *douanier* to believe that the trunks or dressing-box contained something contraband, he minutely examined the contents of both. He drew out of the latter a pot of rouge, which he maliciously held up, so that the persons around him could see it, and, turning the lower end up, to see the name of the maker, exclaimed, "*A la bonne heure, c'est bien Français,*"—he replaced it. He then took up some pearl powder, and looked at the label, "*Encore Français,*" said he. "*Il paraît que la Staël de la Grande Bretagne protége beaucoup les marchandises Françaises.*"

This remark, and the display of the articles that occasioned it, drew forth a general laugh.

"*Mais, qu'est-ce que c'est que ça?*" said the *douanier*, drawing forth one of the *flacons* of the dressing-box, opening it, and applying it to his nostrils. "*Ma foi, c'est du vin, et du vin fort aussi, et non pas Français. C'est donc contrebande, et il sera confisqué.*"

Another laugh followed this last discovery, but Lady Caldersfoot was too much fatigued, though dreadfully angry, to give vent to her indignation.

"How unfortunate," whispered she to Selina, "that I should have put that sherry in my dressing-box at Dover! Did you hear the brutes around us laugh? Well might Burke say, 'The Age of Chivalry was passed.' Had there been one gentleman among the set, he would have stepped forward to protect me from insult. But I will punish that barbarian; I will write a book on the outrages committed on women by the French Custom-house officers, that must speedily produce a total change in the whole system. I am, however, convinced, that my enemies have been at work here, as well as at Dover, to get me into trouble. Be assured, that two, if not more emissaries, came over in the packet with us, paid to occasion me every possible annoyance in their power."

At length the *douanier* having finished his examination of Lady Caldersfoot's effects, she left the Custom-house, and, supported on the

arm of Selina, attempted to walk towards the inn, jostled by porters recommending the various hotels to which they belonged, or by men conveying away the luggage of the different passengers.

"Where is Theodore? Do pray, Selina, call that stupid fellow, on whom I have never set my eyes since I entered the ship," said Lady Caldersfoot.

Selina looked on every side, and at last beheld Theodore, pale, and evidently still very unwell, leaning against a wall. She elevated her voice to its utmost extent to call him, Lady Caldersfoot being too weak to sustain herself without the support of her arm. One of the porters, noticing that something was required, offered his services.

"Call that man," said Selina, pointing out the servant.

"His name is Theodore," added Lady Caldersfoot.

"Theodore, Theodore!" cried the porter, with the lungs of a Stentor; but not the least

notice did the person so addressed take of the summons.

"Look at the stupid monster!" said his mistress. "There he remains as if deaf."

The porter now approached close to the servant, and, slapping him on the shoulder, informed him in French, calling him Theodore, that two ladies required his presence. But the man not understanding a single word of French, and having totally forgotten the new appellation given him by his mistress, refused to move, and the porter, in despair, returned to state that fact.

"Call him by the name of Thomas," said Selina, guessing the truth; and no sooner was this name heard by its owner, than he instantly accompanied the messenger to Lady Caldersfoot, who, ill as she was, could not refrain from bitterly reproaching him for his stupidity. A *fiacre* was now called by the *Commissionnaire*, into which the unfortunate "*de Staël de la Grande Bretagne*," as she loved to term herself, was assisted. Theodore being ordered by her to

get up behind, and Selina entering the vehicle, they were driven off to the hotel, selected not by Lady Caldersfoot, but by the person most interested in the choice, namely, the *Commissionnaire*, who had marked their forlorn state, and determined to take advantage of it, by conducting them to the worst hotel in Calais, but which happened to be that to which he belonged. Worn down and dispirited, Lady Caldersfoot, though she perceived the inferiority of the house as soon as she entered it, was unequal to the effort of going in search of a better, and was glad to retire to her bed.

CHAPTER XIV.

Lady Caldersfoot continued so ill that she was not able to commence her journey to Paris for two days, although most desirous to leave the uncomfortable hotel in which she had taken up her abode. The badness of the accommodation could only be equalled by the extravagance of the charges; and her angry expostulations to induce a reduction of them proved utterly unavailing, nay, more, exposed her to much incivility.

Theodore was found to be perfectly useless, owing to his entire ignorance of the French language, joined to his natural stupidity, which prevented the possibility of his even guessing the meaning of signs or signals. His mistress too late discovered the mistake she had made, in bringing with her to a foreign country

a servant almost incapable of fulfilling his duty in his own; and, with an unreasonableness peculiar to weak and irritable persons, reprimanded him so often, and so severely, as to render him still more stupid. The whole route to Paris was embittered by her recriminations and ill temper.

"How can you be so stupid?" was a frequent question addressed to poor Theodore.

"I'm sure, my Lady, I don't know. I try all I can not to be so; but it seems, the more I try, the worse it is."

This answer, so full of truth and simplicity, might have disarmed a less unreasonable person than the one to whom it was addressed; but it did not mitigate her wrath, which daily increased, as new and manifold proofs were given of her servant's sins of omission and commission.

"*Mettez le sabot, vîte, mettez le sabot!*" would the postilion cry out, when on the point of descending a steep hill; but Theodore remained fixed in the seat behind the carriage; and Selina, compelled to protrude half her person out

of the window, and to scream, to the utmost extent of her voice, an explanation of what was required, became hoarse before the end of the first day's journey.

"Why can't you comprehend what is wanted, once that it has been told you?" would Lady Caldersfoot angrily exclaim.

"Oh! your Ladyship, it all comes because I don't understand their lingo. If the postboys would only call out, 'Put on the drag,' I'd know what they meant in a jiffey, and it would cost them no more trouble, but they are so obstinate that they won't."

Never did the simplicity of Theodore extort a laugh, or even a smile from his mistress, who, herself wholly deficient in common sense, or quickness of apprehension, was the last person to make allowance for these defects in others. No inn on the route was left without a dispute about the charges in the bill, and never, in a single instance, did she carry her point of getting a reduction made in them. *Au contraire*, the innkeepers were more disposed to punish her angry expostulations, by adding

some items, alleged to have been omitted by mistake; and in many places she was subjected to an insolence, that led Selina to wonder how she could risk exposing herself to such annoyances.

Worn down and exhausted, Lady Caldersfoot and suite, as she styled her two attendants, entered Paris, and drove to the Hotel Bristol, where they experienced considerable difficulty in procuring rooms, the terms demanded being considerably more than her Ladyship wished to give, and the proprietor of the hotel not feeling at all disposed to make any abatement in his terms to a person whose appearance and manner were so little engaging. An *appartement au cinquième* was, after much debating, hired, not, however, without her Ladyship assuring the landlord, that she was greatly shocked at the notion of the great and noble visitors, who would be sure to come to see her, being exposed to ascend to such a height.

"Perhaps," said she, "you could lend me a *salon au premier* to receive the junior branches of the royal family, the ministers, ambassadors, and ambassadresses."

This favour was refused. His house, he assured her, was always too well filled to leave a *salon au premier* at his disposal.

And now he was informed—much to the discomfiture of Selina—of who he had the honour of lodging. Lady Caldersfoot left nothing unsaid, to impress her importance on his mind; but her explanations of her literary celebrity, though worded in a style of magniloquence that might have rivalled the puffs on her own books, extracted from an "evening paper," produced not the least effect on him. A good equipage, a dashing courier, and a numerous suite of domestics, were the claims that never failed to meet his attention; and the words, "*vieille folle*," which he uttered *sotto voce* as he retired from her Ladyship's presence, proved how little impressed he was by her self-laudations.

Half dead with fatigue, she ascended to the fifth story, an operation that cost her many minutes to perform, and left her panting for breath when it was achieved.

The morning after her arrival, Lady Calders-

foot commanded a *voiture de remise,* and, accompanied by Selina, set out on a shopping expedition.

"*Conduisez-moi à la première modiste,*" said she to the *laquais de place,* appointed to attend her. He gave her instructions to the coachman, who stopped in the Rue de la Paix, at a very small *magazin de modes,* and the *laquais* hastened to open the door of the carriage.

"*Etez-vous bien sûr que celle-ci est la premier magazin de modes à Paris?*" demanded Lady Caldersfoot, impressed with a belief that it could not be, from the smallness of the shop and the meagre display in the window.

"*Certainement non,*" replied the *laquais.*

"*Mais pourquoi donc m'avez-vous menez ici, quand je vous a dit que je vouler aller à la première magazin de Paris?*"

"*Pardon, Madame, vous m'avez dit d'aller au premier magazin, non pas à Paris, mais à celui qui était le plus près de l'hôtel.*"

"*Mon Dieu, que vous êtes stupide!*" exclaimed the lady, her face flushed with anger.

"*Pas plus stupide qu'un autre,*" said the man

sulkily; "*est-ce ma faute que vous ne pouvez pas parler Français?*"

Do instruct the *monstre* where to go, Selina. Explain that I wish to be driven to the most fashionable *modiste* in Paris."

The *laquais* who had heard the word monster, and guessed it had been applied to himself, became outrageous at this insult.

"*Monstre!*" repeated he, "*Vous êtes bien peu comme-il-faut d'oser appeler un homme comme moi monstre! un homme brave, qui a servi son pays. Mais vous êtes comme tous vos compatriotes; vous cherchez d'humilier les Français; et ce ne sera jamais dit que Pierre Châtel, qui a combattu avec Napoléon, a reçu du pain d'une vieille bête d'Anglaise qui l'appelle monstre! Va! chercher un autre laquais de place, vieille sorcière, je vous souhaite le bonjour;*" and the *laquais* walked off, leaving the door of the carriage open, and the steps down.

"Was there ever such insolence!" demanded Lady Caldersfoot, almost suffocated with anger. "What are we to do?"

"I will let down the front glass, request the coachman to put up the steps, and close the

door; and then I think, Madam, you had better return to the hotel for another *laquais.*"

"Oh, no! not on any account. I would not for worlds have the coachman leave the box. The horses would be sure to run away."

At that moment the owner of the *magazin de modes,* who had seen the carriage stop at his door, came out, and in the most bland tone inquired whether the ladies had any commands to honour him with. He assured them he had a charming assortment of articles of the newest fashion and the very best taste.

"We require nothing," replied Lady Caldersfoot, her anger not having yet subsided, and showing itself in her countenance and manner.

"Madame will not find more elegant caps and bonnets in all Paris," urged the shopkeeper.

"All we require is for you to put up the steps, and close the door of the carriage," said Lady Caldersfoot, impatiently.

"*Comment, Madame! Est-ce que vous me prenez pour votre laquais de place? Si vous étiez disposé d'entrer dans mon magazin, je vous aurais assisté de descendre; mais, pour faire le service de*

votre laquais, vous m'excuserez;" and the man-milliner walked into his shop, and closed the door with a violence that proved his disappointment and indignation.

"Was any thing ever like the conduct of these people?" said Lady Caldersfoot, almost disposed to weep, yet so indignant, that she longed to vent her displeasure on any one within her reach.

And now the passers-by began to pause and stare into the carriage; and the remarkable *toilette* of the elderly lady, so precisely like the caricatures of *les Anglaises pour rire*, exhibited some twenty years before on the *Boulevards*, as well as the evident embarrassment and distress of Selina, attracted their attention. Yet no one evinced any sympathy for their awkward situation, and by degrees the few persons who first stopped to gaze, drew others, until a crowd was literally collected around the carriage.

"*Mon Dieu, mon Dieu!*" exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot, in accents that could leave no doubt of her country, "*comme c'est extraordinaire que*

dans tous ces personnes que regarde nous il n'a pas une qui voulez nous assist."

At that moment a very distinguished looking man, past the meridian of life, but with the air and bearing of a soldier, attracted by the crowd, approached the side of the carriage, close enough to hear the speech, half objurgatory, half reproachful, addressed by Lady Caldersfoot to her youthful companion. He instantly advanced to the open door of the vehicle, and taking off his hat begged leave to offer his services to the ladies, and requested they would explain how he could be useful.

"*Nous vous remercie beaucoup, Monsieur,*" replied Lady Caldersfoot, "*pour votre politesse. La fait est, mon laquais de place ma laissé ici avec la porte ouvert et l'escalier descendé comme vous vois, parceque je lui avez eprochez pour son mauvais conduite. Imagine, Monsieur, quel horrible position pour une dame d'être ici en un voiture sans un laquais pour ferme le porte, exposé à l'impertinente curiosité de tous ces personnes qui nous entourons.*"

This speech, uttered in a tone loud enough to be heard by the persons nearest the carriage,

as it was meant by the speaker it should be, excited only their merriment, nor did they attempt to conceal their hilarity. The gentleman who had offered his assistance turned around, and, with unaffected dignity, gravely rebuked the laughers, reminding them that such conduct towards women and strangers was not what might be expected from Frenchmen. They, shamed into a sense of their impropriety by his calm reproof, slunk away, and then he again repeated his offer of service.

"*Si vous voulez avoir le bonté de ferme le porte de la voiture, et de direz à mon cocher de me menez à la hôtel Bristol, Place Vendôme, je veux être bien reconnoissant, Monsieur, et quand vous saurais que je suis Lady Caldersfoot, bien savais par mes travails, je pense que vous ne sera pas fâché d'avoir assisté moi.*"

"*Pour moi, Madame, c'est assez de savoir que vous êtes femme et étrangère pour m'engager de faire tout ce qui pourrait vous être agréable ou utile.*" And putting up the steps with a dignity of manner that proved that even humble occupations may be performed without

any loss of grandeur, and which reminded Lady Caldersfoot of a passage in one of her favourite poets, whom she was fond of quoting, that even dung may be tossed with grace and dignity, he closed the door, took off his hat, bowed lowly to her Ladyship, directed the coachman to drive to the Hotel Bristol, and disappeared.

"Oh! what a man, Selina! What dignity! what high breeding! That is indeed a *preux chevalier*. How I regret not having asked his name. Did you observe how the brutes, who stood gazing and laughing at us, fell back when he reproved them. He must be a person of high rank and distinction. A thought strikes me. Yes, it must be so! Depend on it he is the King! Only fancy what an adventure! I am now delighted that my *laquais de place* left us, as it has led to this delightful *rencontre*. What an incident to have to relate: and then only imagine what *his* surprise will be when I am presented at the Tuileries, and that he discovers my celebrity! Oh! it's quite delightful!"

Lady Caldersfoot was so pleased by what she

called this charming adventure, that she quite forgot the disagreeable event that led to it, ere she returned to the hotel. Arrived there, however, she sent for the proprietor, and made a serious complaint against the *laquais*, to which, as is usual in such cases, she was answered, that of all the *laquais* in attendance at his house, Pierre Châtel was considered the most civil and obliging. He begged her Ladyship's pardon for venturing to assure her that she would not find, in all Paris, a servant who would submit to be accused of stupidity, or called a monster, as Pierre Châtel had complained had occurred to him.

"Then," said the lady, "I will take out my own servant; *he* will not presume to resent any of those little ebullitions of temper peculiar to persons of genius. Monsieur is not, perhaps, aware that I am one of the most celebrated writers in Europe!"

"Yes; Madame did me the honour of confiding that fact to me last evening, on her arrival."

"Ah! true; I had forgotten it. Be so

obliging as to send my servant, Theodore. But stay a moment. Do inform me if the King is not a tall, handsome, and noble-looking man?"

"Certainly, Madame, his Majesty is all that. He is, to be sure, no longer *dans sa première jeunesse, mais* he is, nevertheless, *un bel homme.*"

"You see I was right, Selina; yes, perfectly right. I always am. *I* never make a mistake, and am consequently more impatient when I observe the stupidity of others. Yes, I knew it was the King."

Theodore now made his appearance, and with a most rueful countenance, of which, however, his mistress took no notice.

"You are to go out with the carriage, Theodore," said she. "I know you are going to remind me that you do not speak a word of French, but that does not signify. All you will be required to do is, to hand to the coachman my written instructions of where he is to drive to, and to open the carriage-door and let down the steps, just as you do at home."

"I beg your Ladyship's pardon, but I'm so

very hill, I can scarce stand upright. The sea-sickness almost killed me; and ever since I have not got a morsel of wholesome victuals, so I'm nearly starved, and so weak, I don't know what to do. I can't ask for nothing, owing to not knowing their lingo, and they keep offering me such outlandish things as I never seed in all my born days, and can't abide the sight of."

"The air and exercise will do you good, and render you less fastidious about your food; so get your hat and be ready, for I shall go out in a few minutes. And now, Selina, I think I had better write the announcement of my arrival, without any loss of time."

Lady Caldersfoot ascended to her *appartement au cinquième*, and seated herself at a table, where, having devoted a considerable time to the task, she produced, and with an air of great self-satisfaction, the following article, which she read aloud to Selina:—

"*Nous sommes heureux de l'avoir dans notre pouvoir à annonoez à nos lecteurs que la plus célèbre auteuresse de la Grande Bretagne êtes*

arrivez dans notre capital.—Lady Caldersfoot est, comme sera devinez toute suite, la dame en question, et le réputation que ses travails, si plein d'information, génie, interêt et esprit, a acquis pour elle, veux, nous ne doute pas, procurer pour elle un reception plus brilliant que cela de aucun étrangère qui a jamais entrez Paris.—Sa seigneurie a l'intention à restez seulement un court temps avec nous, étant appellez par les autres nations de Europe à visitez leurs capitals, comme ils sont pressez de payez leurs hommage au de Staël d'Angleterre."

"I think that will do," observed she.

"Pardon me, Madam, but there are a few grammatical errors and faults in the idiom," said Selina.

"Errors!" exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot, "what can you possibly be thinking of? I who write French with as great a facility and purity as I do English, to be accused of grammatical errors and faults in the idiom, and by my *femme de chambre*, too! I really wonder at your taking so great a liberty, and I desire you never pre-

sume to do so again;" and she turned angrily away, evidently deeply offended with Selina.

"We will leave this at Galignani's, that he may not only have it inserted in his paper, but also in several others," said Lady Caldersfoot. When arrived at Galignani's, her Ladyship entered his shop, and announced the purpose of her visit.

"Your Ladyship's arrival will be regularly noticed in our paper," replied a clerk who spoke English perfectly well; "but if anything more than a simple mention of the name, arrival, and at what hotel is required, it must be paid for as an advertisement."

"Inform me, then, how much it will cost?"

The clerk ran his eyes over the paper, and a smile he could not conceal betrayed his sense of its absurdity, and the errors with which it abounded.

"I wish you to have it inserted in three or four of the French newspapers," said Lady Caldersfoot; "and desire that no change, not even that of a single word, may be made in it."

"As you please, Madam," replied the clerk; who, having counted over the number of lines, stated the expense of the advertisements in the different papers, amounting to a larger sum than her Ladyship had calculated on, but which she however paid, remarking how much better such affairs were managed in London, where the proprietors of papers were too happy to receive fashionable news, to make any charge for its insertion. The advertisement, read aloud by the clerk as soon as its writer had left the shop, produced peals of laughter among the other clerks and *habitués*.

From Galignani's Lady Caldersfoot proceeded to Madame Baréne, the most celebrated Parisian *modiste*, where hats, caps, bonnets, turbans, and *coïffures* of every description were displayed for her inspection. She selected the most youthful, and of the brightest colours, resisting the suggestions of Madame Baréne, who, anxious for the credit of her establishment, wished her customers to wear only headdresses suited to their ages and countenances. As several of these, the least appropriate, were

tried on, *les démoiselles* of the *magazin*, and, indeed, the polite Madame Baréne herself, could hardly conceal their inclination to laugh at the airs and pretensions of the very plain elderly lady, whose vanity was so openly exhibited as to lead them to suppose she was half crazed.

"*Je trouve que cette turban de crêpe de rose pâle me vais remarquablement bien. Le rose tendre est mon colour favorite,*" observed she, assuming a languishing air, as she admired herself in the large mirror.

Madame Baréne said she was sorry she could not let her ladyship have that turban, as it was made for the young bride, La Duchesse de Miraflores, and must be sent home immediately.

"*Faisez-moi un précisément comme lui,*" said Lady Caldersfoot, "*et je vous prie, laisse moi avoir le demain. Il faut, aussi, que vous fournissez moi avec un garlande de laurier.*"

"To be worn on a cap, I suppose, Madame?" inquired the *modiste*.

"*Pas de tout, pas de tout; il est pour porter dans mon cheveux.*"

The utter astonishment of Madame Baréne and *les démoiselles* is not to be described, at the notion of an extremely ill-looking old woman appearing in her hair, or rather in a wig, and wearing a wreath.

"*Je suis une auteuresse célèbre, enfin le plus célèbre de la Grande Bretagne, et il est pour cela qui je souhaite de porter le guirlande qui est approprié aux grands auteurs.*"

"*Ah! c'est différent, Madame,*" replied the *modiste.* "*Et de quelle forme, Miladi, désire-t-elle que la guirlande soit faite?*"

"*Comme celui représenté dans la tableau de Corinne à la Capitol,*" answered Lady Caldersfoot, perfectly unconscious of the ridicule to which she was exposing herself.

Having, as she now considered, made all the purchases necessary for entering society *en grande toilette,* Lady Caldersfoot descended to her carriage—but found that her footman had deserted his post. The porter explained that the servant had been taken so dangerously ill, that he had been obliged to be removed into his lodge, where he still remained in great pain.

" How provoking," exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot, " that he should choose this time above all others to fall ill!"

" *Qu'est-ce que Madame désire soit fait pour le pauvre homme?*" inquired the porter.

" *Envoyez-lui à l'Hôpital la plus près,*" replied she with the utmost indifference, " *et laisser-moi savoir l'adresse de l'Hôpital où il étes placé. Je loge à l'Hôtel Bristol.*"

" *Mais, Madame, ce serait mieux que vous vous chargiez de votre domestique. Pauvre homme, il est étranger, et nous ne pouvons rien faire pour lui.*"

" *Envoyez-lui à l'Hôpital, et je veux payé pour qu'on auriez soin de lui,*" said the unfeeling old woman; and, motioning to the porter to open the carriage-door, she stepped in, followed by Selina, who, shocked and disgusted by her gross selfishness and insensibility, determined, when she entered the hotel, to see its respectable mistress, give her some money to ensure good treatment for poor simple Thomas, and to have him removed. The gentle manner, good countenance, and above all, the pure French of Selina, won the good-will of the hostess, who

pledged herself to send off a *fiacre* with one of the waiters to remove the poor man, and to have a physician called in to see him. She did not let the hostess know that either the money or kindness originated solely with herself; and so liberal was the donation she placed in her hand, that the kind-hearted Frenchwoman, believing it was sent by Lady Caldersfoot, remarked to her husband when Selina had withdrawn, that "*cette vieille folle Anglaise avait un bon cœur après tout.*"

"*Imaginez-vous, ma chère,*" observed he, "*qu'elle vient de me chercher pour m'expliquer qu'elle est prête de donner de ses autographes à toutes les personnes qui désirent d'en avoir; quelle idée, n'est-ce-pas?*"

"*Elle est Anglaise, mon cher, c'est assez dire,*" was the reply of the hostess, who was firmly convinced that everything strange and eccentric in Lady Caldersfoot might be attributed to her being English—a belief from which many of her compatriots, with higher pretensions to education and knowledge of the world, are not exempt.

The following day the announcement of Lady Caldersfoot's arrival appeared in Galignani's paper, as also in three or four French papers, all which were forwarded to her Ladyship. But what was her dismay, when she observed that, in each journal, the notice was headed by the word *annonce*, proving that the paragraphs were paid for.

"How stupid!" exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot. "This spoils all, for every one will now see that the notice has been paid for, which will destroy the intended effect, and give rise to spiteful remarks among my enemies. Ah! why should fame be ever followed by envy? and why should my compatriots, instead of being proud of their countrywoman, pursue me with such jealousy?"

CHAPTER XV.

The following day Lady Caldersfoot sent her cards to the English ambassadress, and to the few acquaintances she possessed at Paris. She hesitated for some time about favouring, in the same manner, the Parisian ladies of distinction, whose names alone were known to her.

"I am," observed she to Selina, "a public character, and confer honour by making the first advances towards acquaintanceship with these ladies."

"Might it not be better to postpone such advances until your Ladyship has been presented at the Tuileries by the ambassadress?"

"Perhaps so, for then they will be more impressed with a due sense of the honour. Doubtless they are familiar with my works, and long to know the writer; but it is not alone as

an authoress that I wish to be recognised. I desire to be known as a woman of fashion, whose opinions on society have great weight and are of vast importance."

In a few hours after this self-laudation, and while Selina was employed in adding some fantastic decorations to the court-dress of her mistress, the proprietor of the hotel made his appearance, and, with a *triste* countenance, announced that he was the bearer of painful intelligence.

"Good Heavens! what is it?" exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot. "Has the King been shot at, and killed, or wounded? That would be too dreadful to me, who am dying with impatience to see his Majesty at the Tuileries, and to thank one of the greatest *monarchs* of Europe for the service rendered to me in the street yesterday by the first *gentleman*. But you do not speak; you do not tell me if my prophetic soul has rightly divined the fatal calamity you have come to disclose!" said her Ladyship, forgetting that she had not allowed her host time to speak.

"God be thanked, Madam," replied he, "the King is safe! The sad news I came to communicate relates only to your poor servant, who expired in the hospital after a most violent spasmodic attack, pronounced to be cholera."

"Oh! you have quite relieved me. I was terrified for the King, and was thinking that an ode from my pen would be expected, on such an event, by the whole of the royal family; in fact, by all France, if not by Europe."

"Long may it be, Madam, before the pen of any poet be called on to write on such a subject, though, when the sovereign shall be removed from earth, doubtless every poet in France—and we boast many—will pour forth an elegiac strain, rendering it less necessary for foreign bards to commemorate it. But, to resume the *triste* subject which has brought me into your Ladyship's presence, I beg to know whether you have any instructions to give relative to the interment of your late poor servant?"

"None whatever. He will, of course, be buried wherever those who die in the hospital

are deposited, unless the students employ the body for anatomical purposes."

"Oh, Madam!" exclaimed the host, turning away with an involuntary gesture of horror, "surely you will authorize me to see that your poor servant be decently interred."

"I must decline interfering in the business, and for two reasons. The first is, that I am a philosopher, and hold it to be wrong to attach the least importance to where the dead are laid. The second is, that as, in all probability, the medical students will take advantage of Theodore's remains for analysing all the internal appearances symptomatic of the malady which is supposed to have caused his sudden death, I do not think it right that I should be charged with any further expense. If, as I expect, an autopsy take place, will you be so obliging as to state to any of the surgeons who may be employed on the occasion, that a person well-skilled in scientific researches is desirous to know, if the extraordinary stupidity so observable in the deceased when in life, can be at all explained by any remarkable idiosyncrasy in

the development of the brain. I am given to trace effect to cause, and should like to ascertain this point. Indeed, so disposed am I to throw a light on science, that I have left instructions in my will to have my own head opened, in order that the examination of my brain may assist in accounting for how far an unusual development of that organ may confirm the hypothesis, that the genius of great writers and thinkers originates in the large mass of brains. I see you are surprised at the excess of my scientific erudition, no less than of my philosophic self-control and calmness, on subjects that shake the nerves of most of my sex."

"It is true, Madame, I was not prepared to find Madame *si philosophe*. The money that Miladi sent to my wife last evening, by Mademoiselle, to be appropriated for the use of the poor man, who did not live to profit by it, is still in my hands, with the exception of a few *francs*, paid to the persons who conveyed him to the hospital; I thought, therefore, that as it will be amply sufficient to offer a

gratuity to the hospital, and to pay for the interment, Madame would not object to its being expended in that way."

"As you please, Sir; for, although I do not attach the slightest importance to such matters, I have no objection to yield to the prejudices of others; so you may employ the money in your hands for the purposes you mention, with only one proviso, namely, that I am not to be called on for any further sum."

"Madame may be perfectly easy on that point, for the money I hold is quite enough."

"*Quelle drôle de femme! quelle drôle de femme!*" murmured the proprietor of the hotel, as he descended the stairs; "*je commence à croire que l'instruction est une mauvaise chose pour les esprits faibles.*"

"So my *femme de chambre* is not only rich but generous," said Lady Caldersfoot to herself, when left to her meditations. "To give a sum sufficient to defray the expenses of the funeral, and make a *cadeau* to the hospital proves this. I longed to find out the precise sum, but any question to my host would have

proved that it did not come from me, whereas now I shall have the credit of it. How strange that Selina should have the power to give so much money! There is something mysterious in all this, something that might be turned to account for a novel; I must wind myself into her confidence, get her to write down the incidents of her life, and convert it into a book; that, with my name, may be a profitable speculation for me. That reminds me that I must get her to note down for me all that she knows of the Duchess of Glenallen. Her adventures might be worked up into something saleable."

Selina had descended to the room of the mistress of the hotel, to inquire about poor Thomas, or Theodore, as his lady insisted he should be called, and was there when the proprietor descended from his interview with Lady Caldersfoot. Her grave face and moistened eye revealed that she had heard of the death of the poor man.

"Poor fellow! in a strange land, with no one that he knew, or that could understand

his language, read the prayers for the dying to him, or close his eyes," said she; "oh! yes, it is sad to die away from one's own country."

"Be assured, Mademoiselle, he was treated kindly. Poor fellow, he fell into delirium almost immediately after he was brought into the hospital, and died unconscious of where he was," said the hostess,—a good and kind-hearted woman.

"Miladi, to whom I have communicated her late servant's death, has allowed me to appropriate the money you deposited in my hands yesterday, Mademoiselle, for the funeral expenses, and a small gift to the hospital. At first, Miladi was not disposed to interfere; but when I told her that the money she had sent me by you, Mademoiselle, was sufficient, she permitted me to use it."

Selina blushed deeply at this new proof of the disingenuousness of her mistress, but made no comment on it, being determined not to reveal to the proprietor of the hotel, or his wife, that the money had been her own. She shuddered at the thought, that, should *she* be

taken ill, her heartless and selfish mistress would not hesitate to send her off to an hospital, and determined that the first opportunity that should offer, she would avail herself of it, to seek a home with some mistress on whose humanity and kindness she might count.

When summoned to Lady Caldersfoot's presence, she found that lady had been busily employed in writing. Various sheets of paper, marked by erasures at every line, were before her, proving her industry, if not her facility at composition; and her pocket-handkerchief was applied to her eyes, which bore the traces of tears.

"Ah! Selina. You have not heard of the death of poor Theodore! I have been writing a little article on the melancholy event, and I have made such a touching picture of it that it has greatly moved me. When the landlord came, and communicated the decease of the poor fellow to me, in his plain unvarnished manner, it had no effect whatever on my feelings. Events, however sad in themselves, never have, unless represented in a pathetic style; but when

I colour and dress them in my own way, you cannot imagine how they touch me. I really have been shedding tears at what I have been writing. This article will immortalize poor Theodore's memory, and reflect eternal honour on mine, not only as a writer, but as a woman possessing that sensibility and tenderness appertaining solely to great genius. I must read you this article; after which I will send it to Galignani's for insertion in several French journals.

The astonishment of Selina at this new insight into the character of Lady Caldersfoot is not to be described. That imagination, excited into action by a craving for notoriety, should awaken a spurious sensibility that a simple statement of facts could not arouse, seemed to her unsophisticated mind little short of miraculous; and that her mistress should avow it so unconcernedly, appeared to her scarcely less surprising. Hitherto she had been a stranger to the extraordinary influence exercised over weak intellects by an inordinate thirst for celebrity, without the possession of the abilities necessary to achieve this imaginary

good. But that an ill-regulated mind, destitute of one ray of genius, should work itself up to a false sentiment by a key, as clocks are wound up to perform certain movements, she had never hitherto had any opportunity of knowing. Consequently, she was at a loss to account for the moral phenomenon. That Lady Caldersfoot was self-deceived, she could not doubt. The traces of recent tears in her eyes, the flush on her cheeks, and the excitement she manifested at an event which the proprietor of the hotel had declared a short time before had failed to occasion her the least regret, bore evidence to this fact; and Selina considered it as a new page opened to her in the book of life, which, while it furnished her with ample food for reflection, did not serve to exalt her opinion of the heads or hearts of those pretenders to literature, who seek distinction without the means of acquiring it.

Lady Caldersfoot cleared her voice, and commenced the following article:—

"*Le morte inattendu d'un domestique Anglaise dernièrement arrivé à Paris, dans elle-même un*

évènement très peu intéressante pour la publique, devient une sujet que engagerez le intérêt de tout l'Europe quand on saurais qu'il était le laquais de la célèbre Miladi Caldersfoot, l'arrivée de laquelle nous vient d'annoncée dans notre dernière nombre. Cet malheureux homme devouée à son noble maîtresse la suivez de l'Angleterre, malgré ses conseilles souvent réiterée que le faiblesse de son santé lui rendez très peu capable pour voyagez. Fierre de la gloire de son belle et distinguer lady, et soyant si continuellment habituer de voir les homages offert à elle dans le trois Royaumes Britannique, il ne pouvais pas se privez de la bonheur d'être le témoin de sa triomphe à Paris, où la génie est aussi bien compris, et si délicatement fêté. Cet pauvre homme a payez avec sa vie son dévotion pour cette dame célèbre, mais il ne regrettez pas son morte excepter d'avoir succumber avans d'avoir vue son noble maîtresse recevais cette homage que France est toujours fière d'offrir au grande génie.

Théodore (le malheureux se nomme comme cela) la jour après son arrivée à Paris, voyons Miladi Caldersfoot sortez dans son voiture, suivez par un laquais de place, il s'étouffe de chagrin et de jalousie

qu'un autre que lui avait cette honor, et soubitement tombez malade. Miladi, avec ce profond sensibilité qu' n'apertain que au femmes de grand génie, a deviner ses souffrances morales, et frapper par l'idée qu'il peut être ronger par la chagrin, a retournez à la Hôtel pour lui consolez. Mais la coup était donnez! Il a exigé pour dernier consolation que son noble maîtresse lui lassera montez derrière son voiture, et arrivée chez la premier modiste de Paris, il est tombé en syncope, et malgré toute ses attentats et celles de toute les médicins que la noble lady chercher, il est morte en peu d'heures après, bénissant la nomme de son bienfaitrice, son cher noble et célébrée Miladi Caldersfoot.

Le douleur qui éprouve cet éminent autoress, l'empêche de recevais le visites de les Princes, les noblesse, et les hommes la plus marquent dans le politique, comme dans la litérature qui assiège son porte depuis la matin jusque à la soir. Mais nous espère que dans quelque jours elle paraîtra à la Cour, où le famille Royal est impatient de la voir."

Lady Caldersfoot wiped her eyes as she finished this article, during the perusal of

which the feelings of Selina struggled between disgust and astonishment. Such a tissue of falsehood she had not been prepared for, and she felt angry with herself for feeling disposed to laugh at it.

"But I am afraid," said Lady Caldersfoot, running her finger over the lines to count them, that the insertion of this article will cost me a great deal of money. How provoking that one has to pay for such things in France! Nevertheless, I must have it in the papers; it can't be helped."

The article was despatched, copies of the paper that was to contain it were commanded, and instructions were given that all visitors should be told that her Ladyship was still in such grief that she could receive no one; but that if autographs were asked for, she was ready to bestow them, or to sit for her portrait to any artists of acknowledged merit that might solicit that favour.

"I should be glad," said she to Selina, looking at herself in the mirror, "that my portrait was taken just now, for the shade of melancholy

diffused over my countenance would lend additional interest to the picture, more especially as the date of it will correspond with the death of poor Theodore, an event which, proving my deep sensibility, and the devotion always excited in the breasts of those permitted to approach me, will be gratifying to posterity."

There were moments when Selina really doubted the sanity of Lady Caldersfoot, and yet in no way was the folly of that lady evinced, except by a vanity so surpassing belief, to all save those who witnessed its craving for admiration, and the incessant efforts made to win it, that she was compelled to admit that a monomaniac, if not quite mad, approached very near the confines of insanity, exposing herself to ridicule, while madness inspired only pity. Lady Caldersfoot thought, spoke, dreamt only of self. The rest of the world was looked on only as in relation to any advantage she could derive from it. Those who flattered her she liked, or fancied she liked, for the moment; but for those who did not administer to her self-love she entertained a positive dislike, and

attributed their coldness or reserve to envy and jealousy of her celebrity. So insatiable was her vanity, that no food was too coarse to gratify its voracity. Those, and they were many, who, for sake of laughing at her, would utter the most fulsome flatteries, she considered as her only friends, being wholly blind to their insincerity, and to the ridicule their adulation drew on her.

The following day, the papers containing the absurd article written by Lady Caldersfoot were sent to her; and again the word "*annonce*" prefixed to it proved that it was nothing else than a paid advertisement.

"How enraging!" exclaimed she. "How abominably stupid these French newspaper persons must be! I wonder the literary people here don't manage to bring them to reason. They are more docile with us in England. Who ever saw the publishers' puffs, quoted from 'evening papers,' the names of which, however, are never put down, for the good reason that no such notices were ever given, inserted as advertisements in London? No; here one

of the great means of extending the fame of authors, whom critics are too envious of to render justice to, is unknown! I have been thinking, Selina," resumed Lady Caldersfoot, "that as you have little to occupy your time here, you might keep notes of my conversation with you, as well as of the different events that occur during my stay, and which I shall not have time to jot down."

"I am afraid, Madam, that I have no talent to enable me to perform such a task satisfactorily."

"I do not, of course, expect you to write as I do. All I require is a plain statement, which I can afterwards colour, as only great writers can. I am sure, that if notes were kept of my conversation, even with my *femme-de-chambre*, just touched up by me, a publisher in London would pay *me* handsomely for the volume; and I would make you a present for your trouble. Not that it would be a trouble,—far from it; it would really become a labour of love, for I say such original, such piquant, such witty things, that you could not fail to be delighted when

you read them. But you do not seize the idea as I expected. I am afraid, that although your own language is correct, and that you speak French and Italian tolerably, your intellect is of a mean order. I have noticed that you do not appear to appreciate the brilliant things I say and write. For example,—yesterday, when I read you the notice of the death of poor Theodore, which drew tears from me, and will, I venture to predict, from thousands, instead of showing either the sensibility or enthusiastic admiration I anticipated, you remained unmoved."

"You are right, Madam, my intellect is of a very mean order. I am a very poor judge of literature, and incapable of appreciating brilliant conversation," replied Selina, anxious to escape the odious task of noting down the inane and egotistical sayings of her foolish mistress.

"Do not despair of becoming other than you at present are," said Lady Caldersfoot. "A woman, with an intellect like mine, cannot fail to produce an effect on yours. At present you are surprised, overpowered by my genius, but

in time you will become capable of comprehending it."

The next day a visiting card, with an invitation to a *soirée* from the English ambassadress, put Lady Caldersfoot on the *qui vive*.

"I must make a striking effect on this occasion," observed she to Selina, "for it will be the opening of my Parisian campaign. Lady Granville, that best-bred of all ambassadresses, will, doubtless, assemble all the *élite* of French society to do homage to me, and I should like to render honour to her *salons* by my appearance. All eyes will, of course, be fixed on me; my dress will be noted and copied, so you must exert all your taste and skill in my *toilette* that evening. I must also not be idle. I must prepare replies to the elegant compliments that will, doubtless, be addressed to me on that occasion. Every word I utter will be sure to be commented on, and noted down; and I must maintain the honour of an English *bel esprit*, by a constant fire of *bon mots*, and lively sallies. You must take care that I drink some strong coffee before I go. It clears the intellect and excites the fancy."

It became evident to Selina, after some days, that her mistress's expectations of the sensation her presence was to excite at Paris, had not been realized. Disappointed vanity began to reveal itself in her temper, which, depending solely on adulation, the want of that stimulant rendered her irascible and capricious. The few cards left at her door, and the constant answer to her daily inquiries, whether autographs had been requested, or if painters had solicited permission to paint her portrait, that no such requests or solicitations had been made, enraged her. Paris, she assured Selina, was no longer what it had been. Genius no more received due homage there, or else her enemies in England had concocted some scheme to frustrate her hopes of popularity in the French capital.

On the evening of the assembly at the English Embassy, Lady Caldersfoot commenced her *toilette* at least three hours before she could present herself there. Caps were tried on, turbans and *chapeaux*, in turn, replaced them; and at length her Ladyship decided, that as the present was to be her first appearance in

public, she would, as a mark of appropriate distinction, wear the wreath of bays, commanded at Madame de Barene's, on the leaves of which, Selina was to sew the few loose brilliants her mistress possessed.

"How slow you are! will you never have done?" repeated the impatient lady, while her *femme de chambre* attached the diamonds as rapidly as she could. A green velvet gown, of obsolete fashion, and a scarlet India scarf embroidered in gold, with the wreath of bays, fastened behind by a bow of ribbon the colour of her scarf, and which fell down on her neck, as the fastening of the wreaths represented on the busts of Cæsar, completed the fantastic costume of Lady Caldersfoot. A quantity of rouge, put on the cheek-bones, as well as the rest of the cheeks, gave a peculiarly fierce look to her eyes, and her whole appearance was so *outré*, that Selina felt assured she would become an object of general observation at the embassy, for which she departed perfectly satisfied with her own appearance, and anticipating a triumphant *succès*.

When her Ladyship returned at a late hour, she was in high spirits.

"Never," exclaimed she "was there a more brilliant or successful *début* in the *beau monde* than I have made this evening. No one else was looked at—no one else cared for except me; I was quite the attraction of the evening; and much of my brilliant reception was owing to two of the *attachés* at the embassy, who told every one who I was, not forgetting to explain that I am the first authoress in England. I must say those young men were justly proud of me, for they did nothing but present persons of distinction to me, and compliment me on my works. They even repeated passages out of my 'Delicate Dilemma' and 'Elegant Errors.' I was really almost overpowered by their attention, and well-turned compliments. "The Prince de Joinville was there, and was very civil to me. I overheard him tell a lady, that he should like of all things to have a likeness of me for the figure-head of his ship, —was not that flattering? It made the lady, and a very pretty person she is, so angry, that

she affected to laugh in a scornful manner, but I knew it was her envy. Indeed, I must own that all the women seemed jealous of the sensation I excited, and the universal attention I received. Lady Granville, who is all amiability, was fearful I might be distressed by the sort of *furore* with which I was followed, and several times tried to check the *attachés* in their somewhat too marked attentions to me; but, dear, fine, young men, they were so enthusiastic in their admiration of their countrywoman, and so anxious to make the Frenchmen partake it, that they could not be repressed. I told the Duke de Joinville, that although I had not yet had the honour of being presented at the Tuileries, I had the honour, and pleasure too, of seeing and speaking to the King. He looked surprised, asked where, and I told him. He quite enjoyed it. It is a great pleasure, and will, I am sure, be a great advantage to me to have made two such friends as the two *attachés*. They will, I foresee, spare me a good deal of expense in *annonces*—as the newspaper people here call advertisements—for

they will tell every one of my celebrity. I remember perfectly having seen these two charming young men in society in London. They told me they were longing to have the honour of being presented to me then, but that they dared not request that favour, seeing me always surrounded by a crowd, offering homage to me; but that here, where my *renommée* had not yet become known, they ventured to enjoy my society before the Parisian world, as would be sure to be the case, engrossed me. They will, as they said, become my *proneurs*, and bring themselves into fashion by acting as my *aide-de-camps*."

Such was the state of excitement into which Lady Caldersfoot was thrown, that the doubts of her sanity, often before awakened in the mind of Selina, became renewed. Never previously could she have imagined that gratified vanity could have produced such an intoxication of the spirits as she now witnessed. It was evident to her, that the *attachés* at the embassy had been, what, in vulgar parlance, is called hoaxing Lady Caldersfoot; that the

amiable Lady Granville had endeavoured to check their *mauvaises plaisanteries;* and that her vain and foolish mistress had furnished the subject of general hilarity to those to whom her mischievous and laughter-loving young countrymen had revealed her foibles, they exciting them into increased action by the gross flatteries they had addressed to her, without her suspecting for a moment that she was otherwise than an object of general attention and respect.

CHAPTER XVI.

It had been agreed that the English ambassadress was to present Lady Caldersfoot at the next reception at the Tuileries, which was to take place in two days, and, previous to that event, her Excellency wished to see that lady.

When she returned from the embassy, an expression of great dissatisfaction was visible in her countenance. "I am quite annoyed, Selina," observed her Ladyship, "for the ambassadress has been giving me some advice about my dress, which, though I am sure it was kindly meant, places me in a disagreeable dilemma. If I adopt it, the dress I have ready for the occasion cannot be worn; and if I do not, it will appear as if I disregarded the opinion of the ambassadress, to whom I wish

to pay every mark of respect. Her Excellency told me that dress was a matter of grave import at Paris; that the peculiar taste of the individual was never consulted, but that all ladies adopted the prevailing fashion, with a due reference to the age of the wearers. For example, that women once passed their early youth, never wore pale pink in France, or even pale blue, that grave and sober colours were alone worn by women over thirty; and recommended me to pay attention to these points. Can anything be more absurd? If I did not know that the ambassadress is the most amiable person in the world, and quite superior to entertaining any feelings of envy or jealousy, I should be disposed to think that this advice might be dictated by a motive of preventing my making as distinguished an appearance as if I followed my own taste. I suppose the truth is, that, being extremely popular at Paris, her Ladyship is fearful of creating angry feelings in the breasts of the French ladies, by my eclipsing them at Court, and so wishes to diminish the effect of my appearance by suggesting my adop-

tion of the general mode, which renders all women alike, whereas my own taste in dress always makes me appear *unique*, and at one glance points me out as a remarkable person. The young *attachés*, the other night, advised me earnestly *not* to change my style of dress. They said it was perfection; and men I have always considered better judges of dress than women. At least, in men there can be but one motive for praising; *they* speak from the heart. I must, I fear, abandon my lovely court-dress, which produced such an effect at the last drawing-room of our Queen. Prince Albert appeared extremely struck with it. Pink and silver has always been considered peculiarly becoming to me. 'How vexatious not to be able to wear it here!"

A new court-dress had to be made; and Lady Caldersfoot, having adhered to the kind counsel of the English ambassadress, made a much more respectable appearance than she had ever previously presented. Nevertheless, the profuse use of *rouge*, and the juvenility of her *coïffure*, deteriorated considerably from the

effect of the handsome court-dress, and brought a blush to the cheeks of the amiable lady who was to present her, and who, truly patriotic in her feelings, wished the English to appear to the best advantage at Court.

When dressed, and waiting for her carriage to proceed to the Tuileries, Lady Caldersfoot received a pile of French newspapers—more remarkable for their drollery and piquancy, than for the propriety or good taste of their contents.

"Open them, Selina. Make haste and glance over the columns. I am sure, by their being sent to me, that they must contain something that will give me pleasure, and exhilarate my spirits for my presentation at Court. I dare not open them myself, lest they might soil my dress."

The colour rose to the face of Selina as her eye glanced over the pages, and caught a tissue of the most poignant ridicule, and sarcastic comments levelled at her mistress, in consequence of the articles published by that lady in Galignani, and the French papers.

"Why don't you read the paper aloud?" demanded Lady Caldersfoot. "You know I am in momentary expectation of the carriage being announced."

"The article in this journal," said Selina, laying down the *Figaro*, "is not of a nature to give pleasure; it is extremely impertinent."

"Is it possible?" exclaimed Lady Caldersfoot, looking very angry; "my enemies, my enemies again at work! Look over the others; they cannot surely be *all* offensive."

Selina glanced over each of the papers, but, finding all of the same character, told her mistress that they were beneath her notice.

"Read me the least offensive, that I may judge whence it proceeds," said Lady Caldersfoot.

"If your Ladyship will excuse me, I shall feel obliged," replied Selina, really unwilling to inflict the pain she felt such attacks must give her foolish mistress.

"You will put me out of all patience," observed that lady, "read, and at once, as I have already twice told you."

Selina, pitying the mortification which the article she was so peremptorily commanded to read aloud, must give to one so vain, commenced perusing the following article, not daring to turn her eyes for a moment on Lady Caldersfoot:—

"*La bizarrerie des Anglais était, et sera toujours un sujet inépuisable de ridicule; mais il était réservé à une vieille folle, qui se nomme Miladi Caldersfoot,* (eh quel nom!) d'y mettre le comble. Nos lecteurs ne croiront pas, probablement, qu'une personne qui a la vanité inouie de vouloir se faire passer pour une femme de lettres, ait l'effronterie d'écrire sur elle-même des éloges les plus dégoûtants qu'elle fait insérer dans nos journaux, et que nos rédacteurs par espièglerie ont imprimés sous forme d'annonces. Avec tout le désir de ne pas interrompre l'entente cordiale entre les individus des deux nations, nous ne pouvons pas résister d'exposer la folie d'une 'precieuse ridicule,' encore plus absurde qu'aucune de celles*

* "*Caldersfoot veut dire en Anglais,* Colderfeet; *c'est à dire, pied plus froid.*"

dépeintes par Molière, et qui fait tort à son pays par son ignorance, et sa vanité extrême."

Selina read this insulting paragraph with as little emphasis as possible, wishing, as much as it was in her power, to diminish its force by a rapid perusal. The unfortunate person, however, to whom it was directed, felt every line, nay every word, as if a poniard had been forced into her breast, and writhed in agony under the infliction. No wounds inflicted on the body are so severely felt as those given to the vanity; and as Lady Caldersfoot's was most excessive and vulnerable, her sufferings were intense.

"The wretches! the monsters! the cowards!" exclaimed the enraged authoress between every sentence. "Yes, I see *my* enemies have bribed those of my country to attack me in this dastardly manner. But England will take it up, I feel persuaded. The Ambassador here will demand satisfaction of the Prime Minister. It will, doubtless, be made a national question; for England never will suffer itself to be outraged in the person of one of its brightest literary ornaments. Alas! this is one of the

penalties of fame; and I could weep bitter tears, that I, the lover of peace, whose writings have ever tended to humanize, and soften national asperities, should be the innocent cause of a war, in which thousands may be slain! Would that I could cheat myself into the hope that such fearful results may not follow! for I look down from the lofty eminence where my genius has elevated me, with contemptuous pity on such infamous attacks; and, were my country not wounded through me, I should receive them as new proofs of my superiority. What real genius, of this, or any age, has escaped the shafts of envy? Voltaire himself, whose writings some of mine are thought to resemble, had his Freron; and Pope his Curl and Dennis. You see how cool, how unmoved I am! Look at me, that you may hereafter remember how true genius meets the envenomed darts that seek to wound it."

Selina, as commanded, raised her eyes to the face of Lady Caldersfoot, but instantly turned them away, so much was she shocked by the change in it. Not all the *rouge* of that lady

could conceal the livid paleness that bespread her visage. Her eyes flashed with anger, and her thin lips trembled.

"Yes, I am unmoved," repeated she, though her unsteady voice told a different tale, "quite unmoved, nay, glad; for this vile attack will draw the attention and excite the sympathy of all Europe."

The carriage was now announced, and Lady Caldersfoot, although tremulous with emotion, did not forget to cast an anxious glance at the mirror before which she stopped, laid on some more *rouge*, and then descended to her carriage, affecting a composure that she was far from feeling, and which did not deceive Selina as to the real state of her mind.

"Poor woman," thought she, "how does she by her vanity embitter a life that, without pretensions which have not even the basis of ordinary talent or education to found them on, and which, consequently, expose her to ridicule, might pass tranquilly, if not happily! She is, naturally, neither ill-natured nor unkind; but having taken the absurd fancy of becoming an

authoress, without any one of the requisites for such a profession, she becomes vexed and angry by anything that militates against her ambition, and is either in a state of excitement, produced by the flatteries of those who mock her, or almost maddened by the severity of the truths of those who search to correct her folly."

In due time Lady Caldersfoot returned from the Tuileries.

"I have had a most kind reception," said she to Selina. "The King and Queen were most gracious to me. Both, with the greatest condescension, asked me how long I had been at Paris; hoped I liked it, and that I intended to make some stay. I ought to mention, that the distinguished gentleman who put up the steps and closed the door of my carriage the other day, was *not* the King, and, I now believe, could be no other than the Prime Minister. He certainly must be the next in authority to his Majesty, for there was a lofty grandeur in his air and manner that could only belong to some very remarkable person. When I found the King so amiable and kind to me, I took

the liberty of telling him that my stay in France must depend on a stop being put to the shameful attacks published against me in the French newspapers, and I named the *Figaro* and the other papers."

"I regret, my lady," said his Majesty, "that anything could occur to occasion you pain; but let me advise you to treat such attacks as I do,—smile at them."

"I replied, that so I felt disposed to do; but that the dread I entertained of the insult to me being taken up as a national question by England, and leading to a war, alarmed me. His Majesty was, at that moment, seized by so violent a fit of coughing, that for some minutes he was obliged to keep his handkerchief to his face; and, to prove to you what courtiers the French are, no sooner did he cough, than all the circle around him coughed too, and applied their handkerchiefs to their faces. But when his long fit of coughing had subsided, he kindly told me not to be alarmed, for that such was the perfect good understanding, the *entente cordiale*, as he said, between the two nations, that he hoped

nothing would interrupt it; and then, I suppose, because his Majesty found that I might still further urge him, and that he felt he could not embroil himself with the press, he bowed, and moved on to speak to some one else in the circle. The ambassadress appeared greatly embarrassed while I was speaking to the King. I conclude that she was afraid I might compromise the position of her husband, by declaring my intention of insisting on his interference. Indeed, her Excellency afterwards explained to me, that attacks in newspapers were, in France as in England, either left unnoticed, or the journalists were prosecuted for libels, and advised me particularly not to take any further step whatever in the affair."

"I trust your Ladyship will adopt such good advice," said Selina.

"I have not yet made up my mind. I am so perfectly mistress of repartee, and have such a facility of writing *piquantes* and *tranchantes* things, that I should really like to answer those impertinent journalists, and prove to them that wit and raillery is not confined to

France; and that if their country could boast a Madame de Sévigné, who excelled in the epistolary style, and a Madame Dacier, versed in erudition, England has women, at the head of whom I believe I may without vanity place myself, who need not yield the palm of excellence to France." Lady Caldersfoot drew herself up, and assumed an air of dignity. "I think," resumed she, "that it was rather strange that when the ambassadress presented me, she never referred to my celebrity. I expected her Excellency would at least have said, 'I have the honour of presenting to his Majesty the King of the French, and to her Majesty the Queen, Lady Caldersfoot, the most celebrated of English authoresses.' But not a word of this was said, and I believe my position, as the head of English literature, would have not been known, had not the Prince de Joinville (oh! what a charming young man he is) whispered something in the ears of the King and Queen, which I feel confident produced that extreme kindness in their manner towards me, for which I must feel for

ever grateful. I am sure they did not address the same flattering words to any one else at the reception. Yes, I never can forget both the King and Queen condescending to ask me how long I had been in France, how I liked it, and how long I intended to stay, and then the friendly smiles which accompanied these kind questions. Yes, I may indeed well be proud of such flattering and gratifying attention from such a quarter. However, although the ambassadress did not refer to my celebrity, the two young *attachés* (and most amiable and gifted young men they are) made it generally known, and the consequence was, that all eyes were turned on me. I saw my two young compatriots telling all their acquaintances who I was, as I could easily judge by the persons spoken to turning their glances on me. The Prince de Joinville, too, took great notice of me, and was most gracious. *Son Altesse Royale* even condescended to express his regret that I had not adhered to my English costume for court, because, as he was pleased to say, he thought it so peculiarly elegant and becoming."

So ran on Lady Caldersfoot during the whole time that Selina was taking off her Court-dress, her eyes constantly fixed on the *Psyché* before which she stood, evidently perfectly pleased by her own appearance, and the effect she believed it had produced, and meditating future *succès* in the French capital, the recollection of the annoyance of the morning lost in the pleasure so lately received at the *Tuileries*.

"Well," thought Selina, "if vanity often furnishes sources of mortification acutely felt, it must be owned that the salve applied by its own credulity soon heals the wound." And as she made this reflection, she felt her pity for her foolish mistress degenerate into a sentiment much more akin to contempt.

Lady Caldersfoot imagined that having been presented at court, and having appeared at a *soirée* at the English Embassy, she should find herself sought after by the most distinguished persons in the Parisian world of literature and fashion. But when, after a few days of hope deferred, and that her expectations were disappointed, her anger became aroused, and

she vented her mortification in bitter comments on the envy and jealousy of the Parisians, who could so neglect a woman whose presence in their capital conferred honour on them and it.

"Talk of *l'entente cordiale*," would she say to Selina "it's all a pretence. If the French *really* wished to preserve it, would they have missed an opportunity of conciliating and marking their respect for England and the English, by showing every possible attention to *me?* My enemies have, I know, taken active steps to prevent my receiving the homage due to me here; nevertheless, they could not have so completely succeeded, had not the jealousy of the French aided their malice. A dinner given at the Tuileries to some distinguished individuals of the English aristocracy, and to which her Ladyship was not commanded, achieved her total discomfiture. That the King and Queen could, after so flattering a reception, leave *her* out at a dinner given to some of her compatriots, was a slight not to be overlooked. There must be something more than met the eye in such

a grave insult, and she deemed it a duty due to herself to ascertain the cause.

A long letter was forthwith written to the ambassadress, requesting to be made acquainted with the motive for such an unprecedented instance of neglect, and offence offered to a person whose celebrity *must* be so well-known, and who merited a very different treatment. The answer, although written with all the tact, good-breeding, and kindness which ever characterized the ambassadress, and which rendered her Ladyship so beloved at Paris, failed to satisfy Lady Caldersfoot. That the invitations, or rather the commands to the Tuileries, emanated entirely from the court, and could not be interfered in by ambassadors—Lady Caldersfoot found it difficult to believe; and that any remonstrance addressed to Royalty on such a subject (as her Ladyship threatened to write), would be deemed most indecorous and improper, she could hardly be brought to admit. A disagreeable correspondence with the ambassadress was the result, and Lady Caldersfoot determined on no longer prolonging her sojourn

in a capital where genius and celebrity were so little appreciated.

The evening of the day on which this resolution was adopted, a command to a concert at the Tuileries considerably mollified her Ladyship's anger; and although, when she returned from it, she told Selina that no less than three hundred persons had been present, she persisted in asserting, that to be invited to concerts at the palace was a much greater distinction than to be engaged to dinner. His Majesty, too, had not only smiled very graciously to her, but had, quite in a confidential way, remarked on the heat of the room; and the Queen had in the most amiable manner inquired if she were fond of music? "I feel persuaded," added Lady Caldersfoot, "that their Majesties having been informed of my passion for music, (a pretension Selina had never previously heard her mistress advance,) they gave the concert in compliment to *me*;" and this belief soothed her wounded vanity so much, that her temper recovered its tone, she spoke in terms of the highest eulogium of the Royal family, and wrote

accounts to London for insertion in the papers, of the distinguished favour shown her at the Tuileries.

The change of air had so much benefitted the health of Selina, that she no longer desired to remain on the continent unless she could obtain a situation with a more rational, and less ridiculous mistress, than her present one. She shrank, in dismay, from the *exposés* to which Lady Caldersfoot was continually subjecting herself; and was tired, beyond endurance, by the daily, nay, hourly, self-laudations of her Ladyship, as well as by her absurd schemes for extending a celebrity that existed only in her own weak brain. To accompany her to the South of France and Italy, would be, Selina felt, to expose herself to a series of annoyances, which she had not courage to encounter; and yet as, with all her faults and follies, Lady Caldersfoot had always treated her with civility, she hesitated to leave her in a foreign land.

"I hope you employ the time not occupied in my personal service, in making notes that may be useful for my work," said her mistress.

"Write down your reflections likewise; for, as Mirabeau turned the notes furnished by Dupont to account, I can convert yours into passages of such profound thought and brilliant diction, that you never could imagine that mere common-place remarks could have suggested them. Be assured, that genius is the true Midas, whose touch turns all to gold, as I will prove to you if you write notes."

The proprietor of the hotel and his wife had, from the commencement of Lady Caldersfoot's *séjour* in their house, treated Selina with the utmost kindness and attention. They soon discovered her superiority to the subordinate place she filled, and as quickly observed the follies of her mistress, and pitied a well educated person, who was subjected to a daily endurance of them. Many comforts, for which no charge was made to Lady Caldersfoot, were provided for Selina; not the least of which was the loan of books, that agreeably filled up her solitary hours. Selina was one day descending the stairs, to return some of the books lent to her, when the tones of a well-remembered voice

struck on her ear. She paused, turned round to look on the speaker, and recognised the kind, the beautiful, Mrs. Fraser, and one of her sisters. Overjoyed, she approached them, and no sooner had Mrs. Fraser caught a view of her face, than she ran and embraced her, exclaiming, "Dear, good, Selina!—how delighted I am to see you! Do come into my apartment;" and seizing the hand of Selina, she drew, rather than led her into one of the *salons* of a very handsome suite of rooms, where Mrs. Herbert and her other daughter were occupied writing at a table. Nothing could exceed the kindness of the reception she met with from that excellent woman and her unmarried daughters; while from Mrs. Fraser, a more affectionate one could not be given by a sister. They had arrived from the South of France only the previous evening, *en route* for England, where they were returning sooner then they had intended, owing to Miss Herbert's being on the eve of marriage with a young English nobleman, with whom they had become acquainted during their travels.

"All the work of this dear, dear creature," said Mrs. Herbert, imprinting a kiss on the brow of Mrs. Fraser, "who has bestowed a fortune on her sisters that renders them eligible matches for those whose parents might otherwise make objections that probably could not be got over."

"No, no, dear mother. Be assured, Lord Gulstone would have gladly married dear Emma had she been portionless; and *his* parents love him too well to have offered any obstacle to his wishes."

"Just like you, dearest, always trying to make light of the good you do," said the fond mother, her eyes beaming with tenderness.

"And who are you with here, my good Selina?" inquired Mrs. Fraser. "How glad I am that we are in the same house." When informed that Selina was living with Lady Caldersfoot, Mrs. Herbert shook her head: "Poor Lady Caldersfoot!" said she; "I knew her very well some years ago. I hope she is not still searching after celebrity and acquiring only notoriety. But I should have said, Poor *Selina*,

instead of Poor Lady Caldersfoot, for, unless her Ladyship is greatly changed indeed, Selina cannot have a comfortable place."

"Then she *must* come to me," interrupted Mrs. Fraser, taking Selina's hand. "You look pale and languid, my dear girl; indeed you do. Ah! I knew, when I saw the terrible event announced in the English papers, what you would feel; and often and often did I think of you, and wish to know where to write to you, to ask you to come to me. There, don't weep, dear Selina, for if you have lost one friend you have still an older, and a most attached one, hasn't she, mother?"

"Yes, *three* friends," replied Mrs. Herbert; "for never can your sisters or I forget what a comfort she was to you and to me, when we required her kindness."

"But do, dear Selina, arrange to come to me, and return to England with us. I will transfer my present *femme de chambre* to Emma on her marriage, and you will always stay with me, won't you?"

Selina found it difficult to tear herself away

from her kind friends, and before she left them was obliged to promise to let them see her as frequently as possible, and to make arrangements for leaving Lady Caldersfoot, and returning with them to England. When she had reached the door Mrs. Fraser called her back, and said, "Oh! I forgot to ask you what was the good you derived from a certain Messrs. Scott and Murray, solicitors in Lincoln's-Inn-Fields, who advertised, that if Miss Selina Stratford, lately living with the deceased Duchess of Glenallen, would apply to them, or furnish her address, she would hear of something greatly to her advantage. My mother cut out the advertisement."

"Yes," observed Mrs. Herbert, "and here it is;" drawing it forth from her writing-desk. "I thought it just possible that you might not see it, so kept it to show you when we met."'

"I never saw or heard of it," replied Selina. "Probably the advantage held out is the balance of salary due to me by my late beloved mistress, which I never thought of since the terrible catastrophe that deprived me of her;" and Selina's

eyes filled with tears, as they always did whenever she reverted to the death of the Duchess.

"You should, however, write to the solicitors at once," said Mrs. Herbert, "and I will forward your letter with mine by this post."

In due time an answer was received from Messrs. Scott and Murray, stating that their late client, the Duchess of Glenallen, had, in consideration of Miss Stratford's faithful services to her, and to mark her regard, bequeathed her the sum of five thousand pounds, with a portrait of her Grace, a large collection of books, some trinkets, and the whole of her wardrobe. Although nearly overpowered by contending emotions at finding herself now blessed with a competency that would preclude her henceforth from servitude, this noble generosity of a mistress, whose loss she had never ceased to deplore, touched her feelings so deeply, that it was long ere she could think of aught but that beautiful and beneficent being, consigned to a premature grave.

Mrs. Fraser, and her mother and sisters, were overjoyed beyond measure at the good

fortune of one whom they so highly valued. Not so was Lady Caldersfoot, who, when apprised of the fact, acknowledged that *she* had read the advertisement the day after Selina had entered her service, but that, fearful of the possibility of losing so useful a companion for her travels, she had concealed the circumstance from her *femme-de-chambre;* proving that self, and self alone, was ever thought of by her. She added, that this unexpected accession of fortune would be a very striking incident in a novel, and that she would certainly make use of it.

"You should rejoice that I kept the secret," continued her Ladyship, "since you may now boast of having approached my person in the most confidential manner; an honour which, from my great celebrity, will reflect much more distinction on you, than if you had served Royalty itself."

Selina returned to England with Mrs. Fraser; engaged a little cottage close to the beautiful Villa near Richmond, purchased by that lady; where, surrounded by the books so often perused aloud to her departed

benefactress, and with her portrait placed in her little parlour, where it is never looked at without grateful emotion, she passes her life tranquilly; a day seldom goes by without Mrs. Fraser or her sister dropping in to cheer her solitude. It is said that the curate of a neighbouring parish, a young man highly esteemed, is soon to become the husband of Selina, who, we hope, will, as a happy wife, forget the trials to which she was exposed as a Governess and FEMME DE CHAMBRE.

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THE END.

TELOS

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